FLASH 130 | SEP 2020 ISSUE

Flash

Fédération Internationale de Philatélie

POSTER OF BULGARIA 2020 FIP WORLD STAMP CHAMPIONSHIP EXHIBITION CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19

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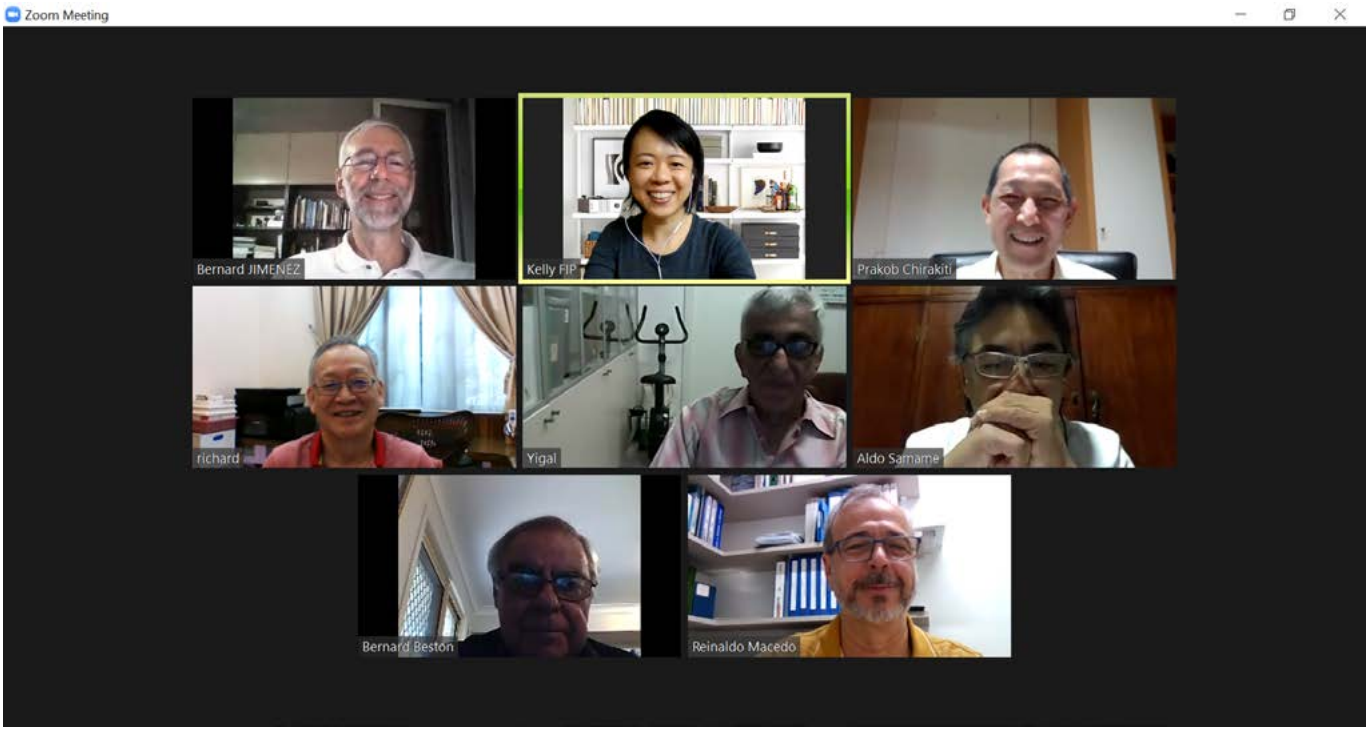
Contents



The 132nd Conference meeting of the FIP Board of Directors via Zoom on 31 July, 2020.

Editorial 2

The President's Page 3

The FIP Board 5

The FIP Commissions 8

The Exhibitions 12

Member Federations 15

The Associate Members 25

Contributions 27

Responsibilities 44

Editorial

Before 2020 began, most of us were expecting a busy 2020 with three FIP Patronage World Stamp Exhibitions, namely LONDON 2020, INDONESIA 2020 and BULGARIA 2020. Many philatelists were planning to join these Exhibitions and some had even purchased their tickets and booked their hotels. Then unexpectedly, came the COVID-19 pandemic outbreaks. The world almost came to a standstill, with worldwide travel restrictions in place and most countries in lockdown. LONDON 2020 had to be postponed to 2022, INDONESIA 2020 was postponed from August 2020 to November 2020 and BULGARIA 2020 cancelled.

However, one the positive aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic, is giving philatelists time at home to enjoy their treasured collections and to rearrange their exhibits; rewrite or add new materials. Many philatelic societies or groups, such as the Mi Oficina and APS from America, HKPS and IPEA from Asia, RPSL from Europe, etc, have embraced teleconferencing to conduct philatelic presentations and discussions. The FIP Board has also been making use of teleconferencing to hold Board meetings and also offered the FIP teleconference account to FIP Commissions to hold philatelic seminars and discussions. FIP Member Federations can also make use of the FIP teleconference facility by contacting the FIP Secretary General, Kelly Ong, for arrangements.

In this issue, you will find the President's message; highlights of the FIP Board teleconference meetings; updates from Members; contributed articles from philatelists and more.

The dates for INDONESIA 2020 Specialised World Stamp Exhibition in Jakarta, Indonesia, have been postponed until 2022 and the FIP Board had decided to postpone the FIP Congress, previously slated on November 10, 2020, until further notice of the new date and venue. We appreciate your comments, suggestions and advice on how to make FLASH more interesting. Enjoy reading.

The Editors.

Editorial

Antes que empezara el 2020 la mayoría de nosotros esperábamos un 2020 ajetreado con tres Exposiciones Mundiales con Patrocinio FIP, a saber LONDON 2020, INDONESIA 2020 Y BULGARIA 2020. Muchos filatelistas habían planeado unirse a estas Exposiciones y algunos de ellos incluso habían comprado sus boletos y reservado sus hoteles. Luego, inesperadamente, llegaron los brotes pandémicos de COVID-19. El mundo casi se paralizó, con restricciones de viaje en todo el mundo y la mayoría de países bloqueados. LONDON 2020 tuvo que posponerse hasta el 2022, INDONESIA 2020 se pospuso de Agosto a Noviembre de este año, y BULGARIA 2020 se canceló.

Sin embargo, uno de los aspectos positivos de la pandemia COVID-19 es dar tiempo a los filatelistas en casa para disfrutar de sus preciadas colecciones y reorganizar sus exhibiciones, reescribir o agregar nuevos materiales. Muchas sociedades o grupos filatélicos, como Mi Oficina y APS en América, HKPS e IPEA de Asia, RPSL de Europa, etc., han adoptado la teleconferencia para realizar presentaciones y/o debates filatélicos. La Consejo Directivo de la FIP también ha usado la teleconferencia para celebrar reuniones y ha ofrecido la cuenta de la teleconferencia de la FIP a las Comisiones para realizar seminarios y debates filatélicos. Las Federaciones miembro FIP también pueden hacer uso del servicio de teleconferencia de la FIP poniéndose en contacto, para los arreglos, con la Secretaria General FIP, Kelly Ong.

En este número encontrarán el Mensaje del Presidente, aspectos destacados de las reuniones de teleconferencia del Consejo Directivo FIP, actualizaciones de los miembros, artículos de filatelistas y más.

Las fechas para la Exposición Mundial Especializada INDONESIA 2020 en Jakarta, Indonesia, se han pospuesto hasta 2022 y el Consejo Directivo FIP ha decidido posponer el Congreso FIP, previamente programado para el 10 de noviembre de 2020, hasta nuevo aviso de nueva fecha y lugar. Agradecemos sus comentarios, sugerencias y consejos sobre cómo hacer que FLASH sea mas interesante. Disfruten su lectura.

Los Editores.

Bernard Beston
FIP President

September 2020

A special warm greeting to you all.

Regrettably the COVID-19 Virus remains with us, and the World is not yet free to fully communicate or travel.

I do hope that you are keeping safe and following reasonable safety precautions.
To those of you who are suffering from COVID -19 both health wise and economically, my sincere condolences. I know that for many of you this stressful situation will be with you for some time.

The year 2020 may pass without any major Philatelic Exhibitions, as we know them.

But I am sure we are all saddened by the over 600,000 lost lives around the Globe.

I am heartened by the establishment of Virtual Seminars; and Virtual Philatelic Exhibitions.

Virtual Seminars have been available in: India, United Kingdom, Latin America, Australia, Italy, USA and many other European Member countries. The FIP Postal History Commission has also now scheduled a series of Online Seminars.

Virtual philatelic Exhibitions, both for One and Multi Frames, have been held in South Africa, and Bangladesh; and virtual Exhibitions are now scheduled in Australia, United Kingdom, India and USA.

The American Philatelic Society has transformed their Annual October Postal History Symposium to a Virtual one. This will be a wonderful opportunity for every philatelist. Congratulations Scott English.

For many of you the mail is returning to normal. For those in Africa and Latin America just be patient, as I am sure the systems will return to normal just as soon as full commercial flying resumes.

However, it may be some time yet, and certainly not until sometime in the year 2021.

This is not just the time for internet activity. The printed word is as powerful and important as ever.

I urge all of you to consider Zoom meeting for Club members and the public.

The Board has determined that the 76th FIP Congress set for 10 November 2020 be postponed. No new date has been set at this time, given the uncertainty of the resumption of regular travel.

You, our members are our most important asset. You shall be informed of the future Congress date just as soon as it is considered safe and practical for you to attend.

With my very best wishes.

Bernard Beston, FAP, FRPSV, FRPSL
FIP President

Bernard Beston
Presidente FIP

Septiembre 2020

Un cordial y especial saludo para todos ustedes.

Lamentablemente, el virus COVID-19 permanece con nosotros y el mundo aún no es libre para comunicarse o viajar por completo.

Espero que se mantengan a salvo y sigan las precauciones de seguridad razonables.

Para aquellos de ustedes que están sufriendo del COVID-19 tanto en términos de salud como económicos, mis sinceras condolencias. Sé que para muchos de ustedes esta situación estresante les acompañará por algún tiempo.

El año 2020 puede pasar sin grandes Exposiciones Filatélicas como las conocemos.
Pero estoy seguro que todos estamos tristes por las más de 600,000 vidas perdidas en todo el mundo.

Me alienta el establecimiento de Seminarios Virtuales, y Exposiciones Filatélicas Virtuales.

Seminarios Virtuales han estado disponibles en: India, Reino Unido, Latino América, Australia, Italia, Estados Unidos y muchos otros países miembro europeos. La Comisión FIP de Historia Postal también ha programado una serie de Seminarios en Línea.

Se han realizado exposiciones filatélicas virtuales, tanto para como uno como para varios marcos, en Sudáfrica y Bangladesh; y ahora se han programados exposiciones virtuales en Australia, Reino Unido, India y Estados Unidos.

La American Philatelic Society ha transformado su Simposio Anual de Historia Postal de octubre en uno virtual. Esta será una maravillosa oportunidad para todos los filatelista. Felicitaciones Scott English.

Para muchos de ustedes el correo vuelve a la normalidad. Para aquellos en África y América Latina tengan paciencia, ya que estoy seguro que los sistemas volverán a la normalidad tan pronto como los vuelos comerciales se reanuden.

Sin embargo, puede que pase algún tiempo todavía, y ciertamente no hasta algún momento del año 2021.

Este no es sólo el momento de la actividad en Internet. La palabra impresa es tan poderosa e importante como siempre.
Les insto a todos a considerar las reuniones a través de Zoom para los miembros del Club y el público.

El Consejo Directivo ha determinado posponer el 76º Congreso FIP fijado para el 10 de noviembre 2020. No se ha fijado una nueva fecha en este momento, dada la incertidumbre de la reanudación de los viajes regulares.

Ustedes, nuestros miembros son nuestro activo más importante. Se les informará de la fecha futura del Congreso tan pronto como se considere seguro y práctico para su asistencia.

Con mis mejores deseos.

Bernard Beston, FAP, FRPSV, FRPSL
Presidente FIP

Highlights of the 130th FIP Board of Directors Conference Meeting on 2 April, 2020

EXHIBITIONS

LONDON 2020

The Organising Committee had to postpone the exhibition to 19-26 February 2022. Several terms and conditions were discussed and agreed by the FIP Board members to be sent to the Organising Committee by FIP Consultant Bernard Jimenez for a revised IREX.

INDONESIA 2020

The Board members approved officially on the request by the Organising Committee to postpone the exhibition tentatively to 5-10 November 2020.

HUNFILEX 2022

The FIP Board members approved the provisional FIP Patronage for this exhibition. The appointed FIP Consultant for this exhibition was FIP Director Mr Yigal Nathaniel.

HELVETIA 2022

The FIP Board members approved the provisional FIP Patronage for this exhibition. The FIP Consultant for this exhibition shall be appointed in June 2020.

TAIPEI 2020 (FIP RECOGNITION)

The Board members approved officially the request from the Organising Committee on 27 March 2020, to postpone the date of the Exhibition to June 4-8, 2021, Director Tan updated that the exhibition would be called TAIPEI 2021, 38th Asian International Stamp Exhibition. The amended IREX shall be sent to all National Commissioners.

REGIONAL EXHIBITIONS UNDER FIP SPONSORHIP

The sponsorship amount of 5,000 USD sponsorship for i) SPM EXPO 2020 to be organised by Club Philatelique SPM (CPSPM), as endorsed by the French Federation - Fédération Française des Ass. Philatéliques; ii) Guayaquil – Ecuador exhibition to be held by the Asociacion Filatelica Ecuatoriana & iii) Banglapex 2020 had been transferred in early 2020. Unfortunately, these exhibitions had to be postponed. The Board members agreed that if any of the above exhibitions does not take place by 31 December 2020, the Secretary General shall write to the respective Organising Committee to request for the sponsorship amount to be returned to FIP.

JURY MATTERS

JURY ACADEMY 2020 LONDON

London Jury Academy Class #8 and #9 had to be cancelled due to the postponement of LONDON 2020 exhibition in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next FIP Board conference meeting would be held via zoom on 30 June, 2020.

Highlights of the 131st FIP Board of Directors Conference Meeting on 30 June, 2020

EXHIBITIONS

INDONESIA 2020
The Board members agreed to have a meeting on 31 July 2020, Friday, for updates on the status of this exhibition and the 76th FIP Congress.

HELVETIA2022
The Board members unanimously approved Vice-President Jimenez to be the FIP Consultant for this exhibition.

CAPE TOWN 2021
FIP Consultant President Beston updated that the exhibition had to be postponed a few months later to 9-13 Nov 2021. He had checked again with the Organising Committee to see if there could be other dates, but the new range of dates was the only option available.

FINANCE MATTERS

The Secretary General was to upload the updated criteria for FIP Sponsorship of small regional exhibitions for 2021 – 2022, as discussed and approved by the FIP Board, on the FIP website.

JURY MATTERS

EMERITUS JUROR
The Board members approved the request by the Hellenic Philatelic Federation to place Mr Anthony Virvilis as Emeritus Juror.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

MI OFICINA ONLINE PHILATELIC ACTIVITIES
Vice-President Macedo requested that FIP should consider some ways to recognize the contributions of the ongoing online philatelic activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. President Beston would like Vice-President Macedo and Director Samamé to send a proposal to the Board prior to the next Conference meeting.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next FIP Board conference meeting would be held via zoom on 31 July, 2020.

Highlights of the 132nd FIP Board of Directors Conference Meeting on 31 July, 2020

SEMINARS

In recognition to the contribution to worldwide Philately via the online meetings and Seminar by Mi Oficina, FIP Board members agreed that Mi Oficina can use the FIP logo with the words "with Appreciation" for their virtual meetings and YouTube uploads.

EXHIBITIONS

INDONESIA 2020
Vice-President Chirakiti and Director Tan shall write a letter to the Organising Committee to request for further updates on the Exhibition, as well as the safety measures that could be put in place if the Exhibition was to continue. In view of the current global travel restrictions and health concerns, the Board members would also inform the Organising Committee that it would have another urgent Board meeting on 8 August, 2020, to decide if the Congress would have to be further postponed.

HUNFILEX 2022
Director Nathaniel seeked the Board's approval for HUNFILEX 2022 to use the FIP logo for one of their stamp issues by the Hungarian Post, subjected to the standard Guidelines on the use of the logo as posted on the FIP website. The Board unanimously approved this request.

IBRA 2021
Vice-President Macedo updated that IBRA 2021 Organising Committee had sent an official request on 26 July 2020 to FIP to postpone the exhibition to 2023, the final dates of which shall have to be approved by the Board.

FINANCE

Director Tan presented to the Board on the FIP Investment status as well as the Income-Expenditure summary for Jan – June 2020. The Board members agreed with Director Tan's reminder that the FIP Sponsorship amount of USD5,000, that had already been transferred to three Regional Exhibitions for 2020, were to be returned before end December 2020, as the exhibitions could not be held due to COVID-19.

Highlights of the 133rd FIP Board of Directors Conference Meeting on 8 August, 2020

76TH FIP CONGRESS

In view that the global COVID-19 pandemic still showed no clear signs of abating, with strict travel restrictions worldwide as well as written feedback on the health, safety and travelling concerns from FIP Members, the FIP Board of Directors decided that the 76th FIP Congress shall not proceed in Jakarta on 10 November 2020. The FIP Board would monitor the pandemic situation according to the WHO guidelines and announce the new date and venue of a physical Congress, as soon as possible. The Official letter from FIP was to be emailed to all Member Federations, Associate Members and Commissions by the Secretary General.

NEXT MEETING

The next FIP Conference Board meeting would be held on 5 September 2020, or earlier if required.

FIP THEMATIC Commission Report on 2020 activities

Covid19 times have led to the cancellation of most scheduled exhibitions in the world, but have not stopped philatelic activity. People have used this stay-at-home period to rearrange their collections and exhibits, write articles and follow on-line conferences. Among the latter there were two on Thematic Philately given, respectively, by Jonas Hällström on April 25 and by Peter Suhadolc on April 15. Both were given via Zoom support and organized by our Indian RPSL friends within a series called Philaminars 2020. Both lectures were attended by more than 150 participants.

Also in Italy several webinar conferences were organized during the lockdown due to Covid-19. Two of them were specifically focused on thematic matters (presented respectively Paolo Guglielminetti on railways and Giancarlo Morolli on olympic philately), with about 60 participants each.

In Latin America also online conferences were held by Luis Fernando Díaz on May 3 (Materiales limítrofes en Filatelia Temática), by David Braun on May 10 (Librando obstáculos, puentes), by Héctor Di Llala on May 22 (El maravillo mundo de la filatelia temática), by Mario Ramírez on June 14 (La esencia de la Filatelia Temática) and June 17 (Franqueos mecánicos, generalidades y su uso en la temática). All of them were given via Zoom support and organized by La Escuelita MO and recorded for Mi Oficina Philatelic Society on You Tube. They were followed by hundreds of philatelists in the Americas and other regions.

The web has hosted even a philatelic exhibition! In June 2020 the FIAF Thematic Philately Commission with the support of the FIAF Youth Commission has organized the FIAF Virtual Exhibition of Thematic Philately - VIRTEMFIL 2020.

Peter Suhadolc (Slovenia) acted as president of the jury composed of Christian Gabriel Pérez (Argentina), secretary, Bernard Jimenez (France), Eliseo Ruben Otero (Argentina) and Francisco Piniella (Spain).

41 thematic exhibits from ten Latin American countries have entered the competition, among which nine were in one-frame. Eight youth exhibits in all three categories have to be added to the above, totaling 50 exhibits. A most satisfactory result!

There were two gold, seven large vermeil, ten vermeil, eight large silver, three silver, one silver bronze and one bronze medal assigned. In the Youth class the jury assigned three large vermeil, one vermeil, one large silver and two silver medals. Among the one-frame exhibits the scores went from 72 to 88 points.

The Grand Prix of the exhibition was assigned to José Angel Gandara for this exhibit Colon: Rumbo a las Yndias (Columbus: Heading for the Indias).

The exhibition organizers have provided excellent on-line facilities and have accomplished their task in a superb way. Last but not least congratulations to all participating exhibitors, who have made VirTemFil 2020 a success.

Report by Peter Suhadolc
Chairman, FIP Thematic Commission

POSTAL STATIONERY ONLINE MEETINGS

With philatelic societies and stamp clubs being unable to meet, many have begun to hold on-line meetings. While the time zone differences often make it difficult to include everyone, many people have been attending the on-line meetings of overseas societies which they otherwise would not be able to attend.

Lars Engelbrecht gave an on-line presentation on exhibiting postal stationery on 27 April as part of the Philaminars 2020 on-line series. This was an excellent presentation as those who have been to Lars's presentations over the years would attest.

The Postal Stationery Society of Australia (PSSA) has held three online meetings with people attending from across Australia and from around the world.

The first PSSA online meeting was on 14 May 2020. Twenty-six people attended including members from around the world to hear a presentation by Ian McMahon on the Postal Stationery of Canada: Envelopes and Postcards from Queen Victoria to King George V. The second on-line meeting was on 11 June 2020 with Malcolm Groom presenting on the Embossed Postal Stationery of Tasmania.

The first PSSA online meeting on 14 May 2020.

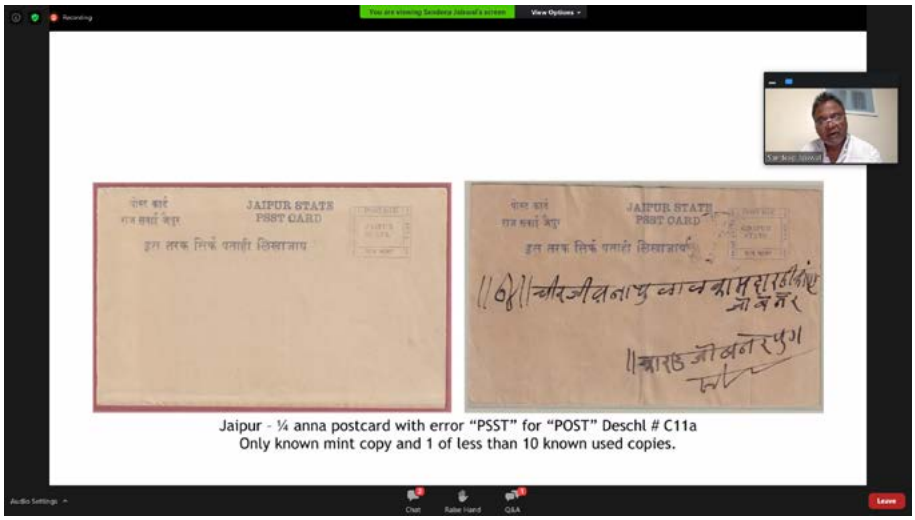
The Postal Stationery Society of Australia held a joint on-line meeting with the Postal Stationery Society (PSS) on 11 July 2020. UK Queen Victoria Stamped to Order Cards / Australian Airletters and Aerogrammes 1944-66 by Maurice Buxton and Frank Pauer.

Videos of the second and third meetings can be found on either the Postal Stationery Society of Australia Facebook page or the FIP Postal Stationery Commission Facebook Page. The presentations on Canada, Tasmanian Embossed Envelopes and Australian Airletters can be found on the PSSA website (www.postalstationeryaustralia.com).

The ability to hold on-line meetings could be a great boost to specialist societies and societies with a widespread membership as well as to collectors in regional areas who find it difficult or impossible to attend meetings and to have contact with other collectors. Online meetings may well continue after the restrictions due to the current pandemic ends.

For future on-line presentations keep an eye on the websites of the Royal Philatelic Society of London (https://www.rpsl.org.uk/News-Events-Meetings/Online-Presentations) and the Collectors Club of New York (Sandeep Jaiswal's presentation on Indian States illustrated below) and the American Philatelic Society for on-line programs.

The FIP Postal Stationery Commission will run an online presentation later in the year.



Sandeep Jaiswal's presentation on Indian Native States for the Collectors Club of New York.

Another development has been virtual exhibitions. The South African Virtual Philatelic Exhibition Savpex has been held for a number of years. Savpex 2020 was held in August 2020 and was a competitive 'One Frame Virtual Exhibition'. It was open to all members of Societies affiliated to The Philatelic Federation of South Africa (PFSA) and all members of FIP Federations.

Other countries are now planning to hold virtual exhibitions including Bangladesh (PHILEX 2020, First Online Philatelic Exhibition in Bangladesh), Australia (Australian Virtual One-Frame Exhibition, AusVipex 2020), India and the USA. With physical exhibitions cancelled or postponed, these exhibitions offer an opportunity for postal stationery collectors to prepare and enter a one-frame postal stationery exhibit.

Report by Ian McMahon,
A/g Chairman, FIP Postal Stationery Commission

CALL FOR ADVERTISMENTS IN FLASH!

We welcome advertisements for each FLASH issue and corresponding online e-FLASH on the FIP website. The advertising charges are as follows:

Specifications	Cost per Issue	Remarks
A5 Landscape Full Colour Advertisement	300 CHF	Every 2 consecutive advertisements, 3rd is Free
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A4 Prime Full Colour Advertisement (Inside front OR back cover)	600 CHF	Every 2 consecutive advertisements, 3rd is Free

*The FIP Editorial team decides where these advertisements are inserted within each FLASH issue.

Write in to the FIP Secretariat to indicate your interest and to check the schedule of the next FLASH issue. The FIP Editorial team reserves the right to request for amendments to any advertisement

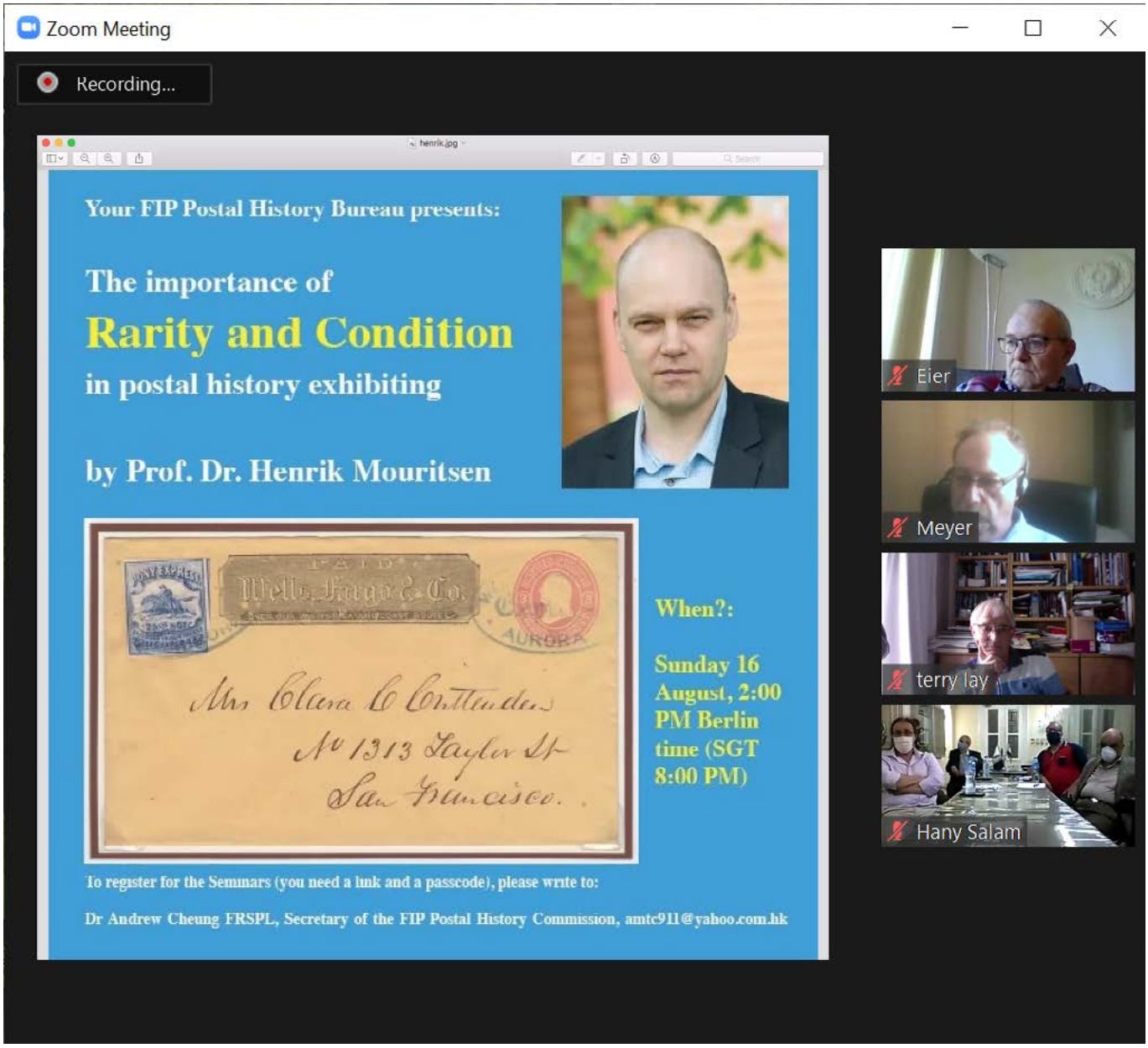
POSTAL HISTORY ONLINE SEMINARS

The Postal History Commission will host five on-line seminars from August to October 2020 on:

"The importance of……in postal history exhibiting"

1. Rarity & Condition (Henrik Mouritsen) Sunday 16 August, 2:00PM Berlin time
2. Presentation (Chris King) Sunday 6 September, 1:00 PM London time
3. Treatment (Dan Walker) Sunday 20 September, 10:00AM New York time
4. Importance (Henrik Mouritsen) Sunday 4 October, 2:00PM Berlin time
5. Knowledge & Research (Andrew Cheung) Sunday 18 October, 9:00PM Hong Kong time

To register for any of the Seminars, please write to:
Dr Andrew Cheung FRSPL, Secretary of the FIP Postal History Commission



The first Seminar on 16 August 2020, was well attended by 150 philatelists from all over the world, followed by an interactive Question and Answer session.

PREPARATION OF BULGARIA 2020 FIP EXHIBITION

Bulgaria's first hosting of a world philatelic exhibition under the patronage of FIP was in 1969 on the occasion of the ninetieth anniversary of modern Bulgarian postal communications and the issuing of the first Bulgarian postage stamps – the "Centimes". The philatelic festival was repeated every ten years and until today, three world and three continental exhibitions had been organized by our federation.

In 2019, due to limited funding, the European Philatelic Exhibition "Plovdiv Phila 2019" was held not under the patronage, but with the support of the Federation of European Philatelic Associations (FEPA).

In 2020, some funding was provided for a World Stamp Championship Exhibition under the patronage of FIP, which was supposed to be held from 29 September – 4 October 2020 in Sofia. The Post of the Republic of Turkey generously offered their own frames for the exhibition. The Union of Bulgarian Philatelists faced a serious challenge to organize a world exhibition of about 1500 frames in eight months and we started to act innovatively. With the appointed FIP consultant Mr. Yigal Nathaniel, who proved to be extremely competent and effective, the IREX was sent to FIP members through special software, ensuring tracking the reading of the message by the recipients. By March 10, well before the deadline, twenty-three national federations had confirmed their participation. Unfortunately, a state of emergency was declared in Bulgaria due to COVID19 and we were forced to suspend the preparations.

Special miniature sheet on the annual carnival of the town of Gabrovo.

The logo, the poster and the mascot of the exhibition were the works of famous Bulgarian artists Mr. Nenko Atanasov and Ms. Maglena Konstantinova.

The website of BULGARIA2020 is https://bulgaria2020.com. Bulletin No.1: https://bulgaria2020.com/wp-content/docs/2020/Bulletin/01-BULLETIN-WSCE-BG2020.pdf

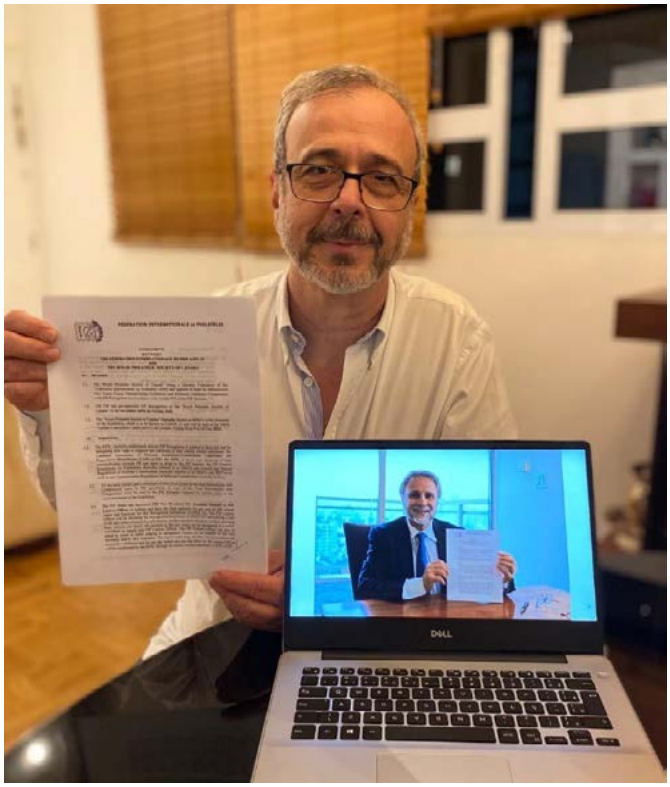
Application forms for exhibitors and commissioners were all to be filled in electronically. The first, was designed to serve the communication between exhibitors and national commissioners (NC). The second form was to serve the liaison between the NCs and the General commissioner. It can be opened only with a password by the NCs and filled in by them on the BULGARIA2020 website. The information from these forms would be automatically transferred to an Excel spreadsheet. This automation was expected to significantly facilitate the work of the General Commissioner's team in preparing the exhibition at its various stages. Possible spelling errors would be avoided.

Let's hope that the crisis with COVID19 will end soon and the philatelic world will return to its normal life.

Boncho Bonev

CAPEX 22 International One Frame Stamp Championship Exhibition will be held in Toronto, Canada, June 9-12, 2022. CAPEX 22 will be hosted by the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada/La Société Royale de Philatélie du Canada (RPSC/SRPC) and will be held under the patronage of FIAF and the recognition of FIP. All federation members of FIAF and FIP will be invited to participate.

(Above) Signing of FIP Recognition agreement by Ed Kroft ; President of RPSC and FIP Vice-President Reinaldo Macedo(Right).



Canada has hosted four CAPEX international exhibitions in the past in 1951, 1978, 1987, and 1996. Canada has also hosted two international youth exhibitions, one in Toronto in 1982, the other in Montreal in 1992. CAPEX 22 will celebrate the 30th and 40th anniversaries of these international youth exhibitions.

One frame exhibiting has grown significantly in recent years with specialized national one frame exhibitions in a number of countries. CAPEX 22 will be a two-class exhibition with a one frame class and a philatelic literature class. The one-frame class will include 400 frames providing an opportunity for up to 400 exhibitors from FIAF and FIP member federations to participate with exhibits from any of the FIP parent classes. CAPEX 22 will be the first fully international One Frame exhibition and the largest showing of one frame exhibits at one exhibition ever. CAPEX 22 will also welcome exhibits in the literature class in both print and electronic media.

Photo courtesy of Tourism Toronto.

CAPEX 22 will be held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre (MTCC) in the heart of Toronto's downtown entertainment district and just steps for the iconic CN Tower, several professional sports venues, theatres, museums and arts galleries. Canada's Harry Sutherland Philatelic Library and the Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation are both just a short metro ride away. The Constitution Hall in the 100 level of the MTCC's North Building will be the site of the exhibition and bourse.

Four large adjacent rooms will be available for society presentations, seminars, AGMs and receptions throughout the exhibition and will accommodate an evening auction.

Toronto https://www.seetorontonow.com/attractions/ is the 4th largest city in North America, and the 6th most connected city by direct flight air travel in the world. Toronto, with over 150 languages spoken, has been named as the most diverse city in the world by the BBC. Explore Toronto's bustling neighbourhoods, enjoy its parks and water front or take a day trip to the world-famous Niagara Falls and the Niagara wine district.

Join us June 9-12, 2022 in Toronto. Plan to exhibit at CAPEX 22 in Toronto. Be part of the first International One Frame Stamp Championship exhibition.

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook and at www.capex22.org for updates.

David McLaughlin
Royal Philatelic Society of Canada

April 23th 2020 Centenary of Inauguration of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, E-Exhibition April 20 – May 31, 2020

by Mehmet Akan
President of the Turkish Philatelic Academy &
Board Member of Turkish Philatelic Federation

Crisis Versus Opportunity

As the words of crisis and opportunity are used together in certain cultures, every crisis contains the seeds of opportunity. The COVID 19 epidemic has been one of the most important crisis we have faced in our times and seriously paralyzed every field of life, including our daily lives as well as almost all philatelic activities.

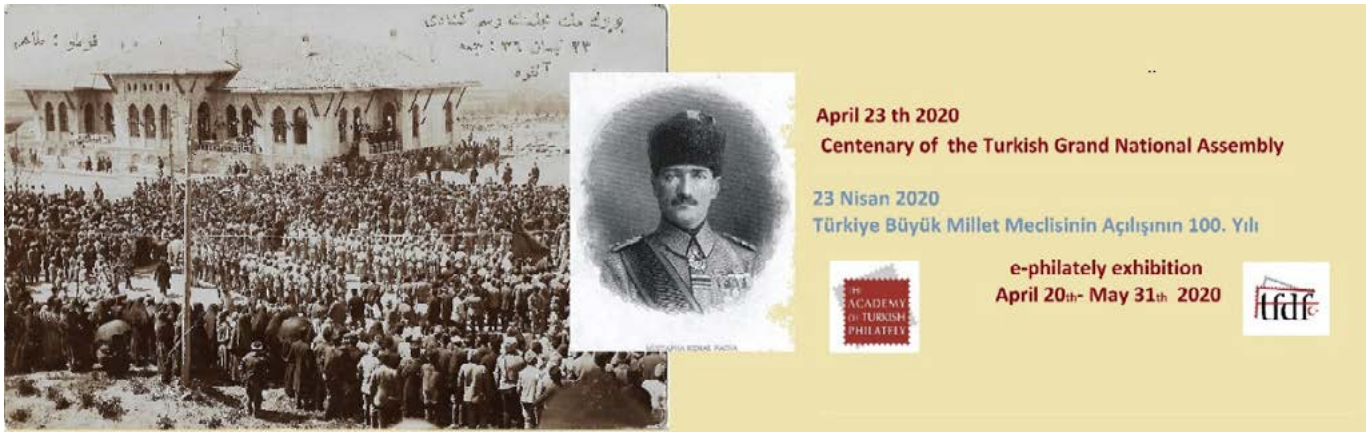
I would like share our experience we had turning crisis into an advantage during the COVID-19 outbreak: The Turkish War of Independence, conventionally considered to have with the arrival of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) to Samsun on 19 May 1919 After Samsun, Kemal Pasha joined to the congress which are coordinated in Amasya, Sivas and Erzurum respectively, and on 27 December 1919 Kemal Pasha arrived to his final destination, Ankara Opening of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) on 23 April 1920 in Ankara was the center of War of Independence. This period, which started in 1919 and ended with the declaration of the Republic of Turkey on October 29th, 1923, constitutes the most important era of the Republic's history. In order to pay tribute to Independence War and Centenary of Inauguration Turkish Grand Assembly, starting from May 19, 2019, we held an exhibition at every stop on the road that Kemal Pasha trailed. On 27 December, the largest national exhibition in Turkey was held in Ankara.

April 23rd 2020 which is one of the most significant anniversary of Turkish Republic's history is the Centenary of Inauguration of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Turkish Federation planned to celebrate this centenary with two separate exhibitions in Ankara, one of which is international youth class exhibition (April 23 is also celebrated as children's day).

Unfortunately, we had to cancel these events due to corona virus outbreak and we are all demoralized since the most important part of the project, in which we would commemorate the 100th anniversary and devote substantial amount of time, has not been concluded.

However, we believed regardless of the circumstances we had to have an organization for the 100th anniversary of these historical events, which are very crucial for our country so Turkish Philatelic Federation authorized Turkish Philately Academia to organize a virtual exhibition. Subsequently, we have successfully structured the electronic philately exhibition on Facebook for the occasion of the "April 23rd 2020 Centenary of Inauguration of the Turkish Grand National Assembly".

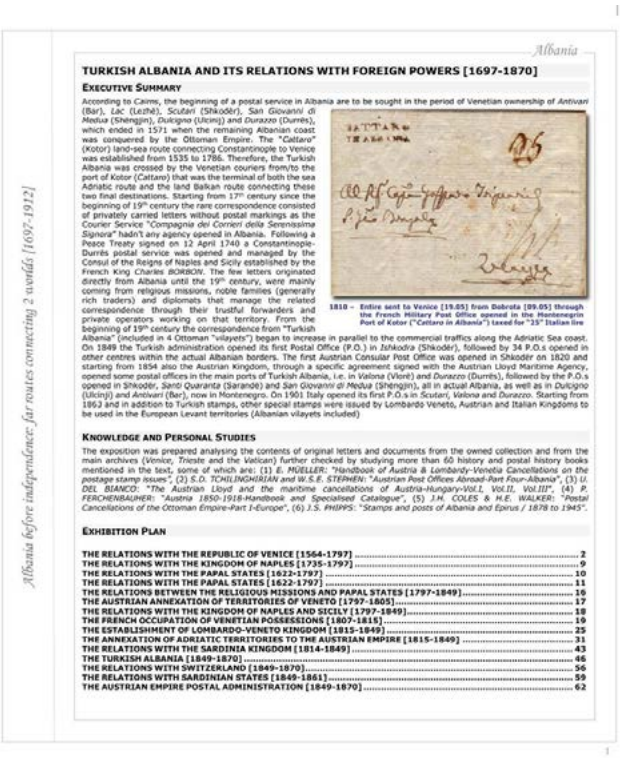
This e-exhibition in which 98 national and international exhibits participated is the first philatelic e-exhibition arranged worldwide. The e-exhibition didn't have an official characteristic but aimed to increase our morale, keep us engaged with our hobby on this strained period of COVID-19 days as well as deepen international correspondence among philatelists. E-exhibition was held between April 20 and May 31, 2020.



Turkish Albania and its Relations with foreign powers (1697-1870) Guiseppe Razza

Exhibits did not involve formal judging by an official jury. Instead, the judging was held based on the appreciation votes of the participants. Each participant allowed voting for eight exhibits he/she likes, other than his/her own. This unusual judgment of application was also different from the traditional ones.

Particularly, we have classified and listed all of the collections into 4 main groups and a total of 51 philatelists voted for them:



Albania

TURKISH ALBANIA AND ITS RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN POWERS [1697-1870]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to *Cairne*, the beginning of a postal service in Albania are to be sought in the period of Venetian ownership of *Antivari* (Bar), *Lac* (Lezhë), *Scutari* (Shkodër), *San Giovanni di Medua* (Shëngjin), *Dulcigno* (Ulcinj) and *Durazzo* (Durrës), which ended in 1571 when the remaining Albanian coast was conquered by the Ottoman Empire. The "*Cattaro*" (Kotor) land-sea route connecting Constantinople to Venice was established from 1535 to 1786. Therefore, the Turkish Albania was crossed by the Venetian couriers from/to the port of Kotor (Cattaro) that was the terminal of both the sea Adriatic route and the land Balkan route connecting these two final destinations. Starting from 17th century since the beginning of 19th century the rare correspondence consisted of privately carried letters without postal markings as the Courier Service "Compagnia *dei Corrieri della Serenissima Signora*" hadn't any agency opened in Albania. Following a Peace Treaty signed on 12 April 1740 a Constantinople-Durrës postal service was opened and managed by the Consul of the Reigns of Naples and Sicily established by the French King *Charles BOURBON*. The few letters originated directly from Albania until the 19th century, were mainly coming from religious missions, *noble* families (generally rich traders) and diplomats that manage the related correspondence through their trustful forwarders and private operators working on that territory. From the beginning of 19th century the correspondence from "Turkish Albania" (included in 4 Ottoman "*vilayets*") began to increase in parallel to the commercial traffics along the Adriatic Sea coast. On 1849 the Turkish administration opened its first Postal Office (P.O.) in *Ishkodra* (Shkodër), followed by 34 P.O.s opened in *other centres within the actual Albanian borders*. The first Austrian Consular Post Office was opened in Shkodër on 1820 and starting from 1854 also the Austrian Kingdom, through a specific agreement signed with the Austrian Lloyd Maritime Agency, opened some postal offices in the main ports of Turkish Albania, i.e. in *Valona* (Vlorë) and *Durazzo* (Durrës), followed by the P.O.s opened in Shkodër, *Santi Quaranta* (Sarandë) and *San Giovanni di Medua* (Shëngjin), all in actual Albania, as well as in *Dulcigno* (Ulcinj) and *Antivari* (Bar), now in Montenegro. On 1901 Italy opened its first P.O.s in *Scutari*, *Valona* and *Durazzo*. Starting from 1863 and in addition to Turkish stamps, other special stamps were issued by Lombardo Veneto, Austrian and Italian Kingdoms to be used in the European Levant territories (Albanian vilayets included)

1810 – Entire sent to Venice [19.05] from Dobrota [09.05] through the French Military Post Office opened in the Montenegrin Port of Kotor ("*Cattaro in Albania*") taxed for "25" Italian lire

KNOWLEDGE AND PERSONAL STUDIES

The exposition was prepared analysing the contents of original letters and documents from the owned collection and from the main archives (*Venice, Trieste* and the *Vatican*) further checked by studying more than 60 history and postal history books mentioned in the text, some of which are: (1) *E. MUELLER: "Handbook of Austria & Lombardy-Venetia Cancellations on the postage stamp issues"*, (2) *S.D. TCHILINGHIRIAN and W.S.E. STEPHEN: "Austrian Post Offices Abroad-Part Four-Albania"*, (3) *U. DEL BIANCO: "The Austrian Lloyd and the maritime cancellations of Austria-Hungary-Vol.I, Vol.II, Vol.III"*, (4) *P. FERCHENBAUHER: "Austria 1850-1918-Handbook and Specialised Catalogue"*, (5) *J.H. COLES & H.E. WALKER: "Postal Cancellations of the Ottoman Empire-Part I-Europe"*, (6) *J.S. PHIPPS: "Stamps and posts of Albania and Epirus / 1878 to 1945"*.

EXHIBITION PLAN

THE RELATIONS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE [1564-1797] 2
THE RELATIONS WITH THE KINGDOM OF NAPLES [1735-1797] 9
THE RELATIONS WITH THE PAPAL STATES [1622-1797] 10
THE RELATIONS WITH THE PAPAL STATES [1622-1797] 11
THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE RELIGIOUS MISSIONS AND PAPAL STATES [1797-1849] 16
THE AUSTRIAN ANNEXATION OF TERRITORIES OF VENETO [1797-1805] 17
THE RELATIONS WITH THE KINGDOM OF NAPLES AND SICILY [1797-1849] 18
THE FRENCH OCCUPATION OF VENETIAN POSSESSIONS [1807-1815] 19
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LOMBARDO-VENETO KINGDOM [1815-1849] 25
THE ANNEXATION OF ADRIATIC TERRITORIES TO THE AUSTRIAN EMPIRE [1815-1849] 31
THE RELATIONS WITH THE SARDINIA KINGDOM [1814-1849] 43
THE TURKISH ALBANIA [1849-1870] 46
THE RELATIONS WITH SWITZERLAND [1849-1870] 56
THE RELATIONS WITH SARDINIAN STATES [1849-1861] 59
THE AUSTRIAN EMPIRE POSTAL ADMINISTRATION [1849-1870] 62

Albania before independence: far routes connecting 2 worlds [1697-1912]

STAMPS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TURKEY
(ANKARA GOVERNMENT)
1920-1923

SECTION I. At the end of November 1920, Ottoman postage stamps, 2, 4 and 6 paras of the London (1914) and 2 paras of the Vienna (1917 series were surcharged first with the overprint of "Ankara 3 Gurush" with typography and then with " Posta gurush 3" in three lines with handstamp. The second surcharge was used on both the stamps with the "Ankara 3 gurush" overprint and on the unsurcharged Ottoman stamps. Thus three series of stamp were created.

FIRST ISSUE
"ANKARA 3 GURUSH" TYPOGRAPHED SURCHARGE

Ankara

Guruş 3

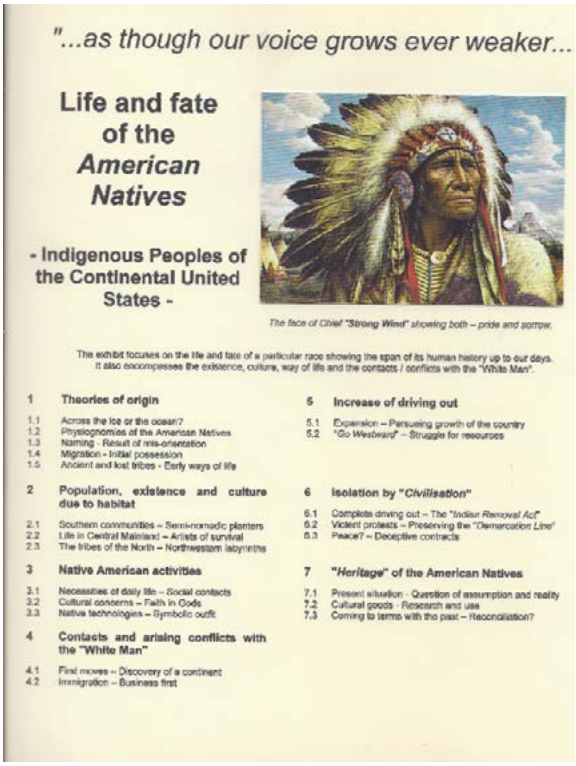
3 kr/2 p Claret | 3 kr/4 p Sepia | 3 kr/6 p Deep Blue | 3 kr/2 p Violet

Inverted Overprints of the set

Left- 1st prize voted POSTAL HISTORY -Turkish Albania and its Relations with foreign powers (1697-1870) Guiseppe Razza

Right – 1st prize Voted TRADITIONAL -Ankara Government 1920-23 Kayhan Akduman

However, after the voting was completed, the deadline had to be extended twice due to huge demand and (consequently) prominent collections (around 50) participated exhibition out of the contest:



"...as though our voice grows ever weaker...

Life and fate of the *American Natives*

- Indigenous Peoples of the Continental United States -

The face of Chief "Strong Wind" showing both – pride and sorrow.

The exhibit focuses on the life and fate of a particular race showing the span of its human history up to our days. It also encompasses the existence, culture, way of life and the contacts / conflicts with the "White Man".

1 **Theories of origin**
1.1 Across the ice or the ocean?
1.2 Physiognomies of the American Natives
1.3 Naming - Result of mis-orientation
1.4 Migration - Initial possession
1.5 Ancient and lost tribes - Early ways of life

2 **Population, existence and culture due to habitat**
2.1 Southern communities – Semi-nomadic planters
2.2 Life in Central Mainland – Artists of survival
2.3 The tribes of the North – Northwestern labyrinths

3 **Native American activities**
3.1 Necessities of daily life – Social contacts
3.2 Cultural concerns – Faith in Gods
3.3 Native technologies – Symbolic outfit

4 **Contacts and arising conflicts with the "White Man"**
4.1 First moves – Discovery of a continent
4.2 Immigration – Business first

5 **Increase of driving out**
5.1 Expansion – Persueing growth of the country
5.2 "Go Westward" – Struggle for resources

6 **Isolation by "*Civilisation*"**
6.1 Complete driving out – The "*Indian Removal Act*"
6.2 Violent protests – Preserving the "*Demarcation Line*"
6.3 Peace? – Deceptive contracts

7 **"*Heritage*" of the American Natives**
7.1 Present situation - Question of assumption and reality
7.2 Cultural goods - Research and use
7.3 Coming to terms with the past – Reconciliation?

TRIAL PRINTINGS

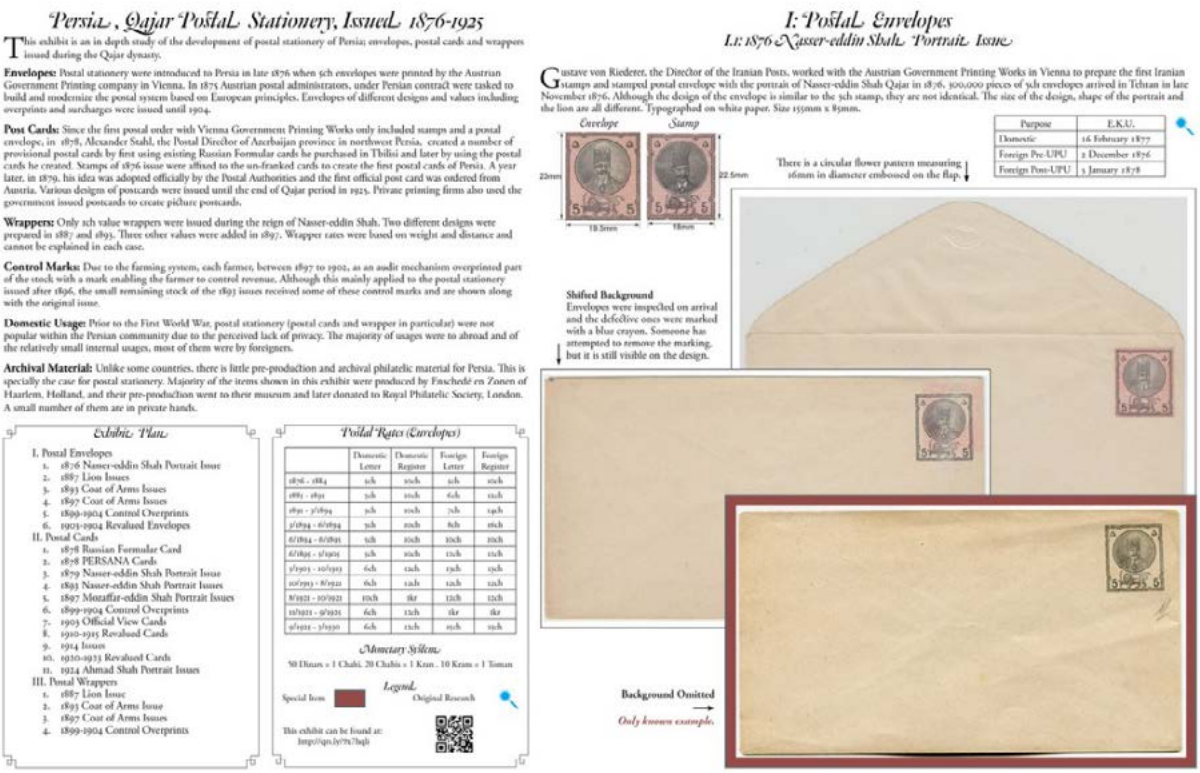
For all the three printings of the Tughra stamps to date only 20para, the 1piastre and 5piastre have been found as proofs. They are printed in lithography using the same stones as the corresponding stamps. Most of them are printed on a thin paper used for the first and second printing of Tughra stamps. They have been printed in black ink on uncoloured ordinary white paper and dyed in different colours for each value over a stretched, very fine silk cloth by a pad or sponge. The 'coloured mesh' seen on stamps due to the fact that the colour was applied by using a pad, or sponge with a fine silk/muslin cloth stretched over the dry printed sheets of the proofs.

20 PARAS – THIN PAPER

20pa black on yellow trial print for third printing on thin paper, block of six, type A-B-C/I-JK.

20pa black on yellow trial print for third printing on thin paper, block of twelve, type C-D-A-B/K-L-J/G-H-E-F
The largest multiple recorded.

Left: OUT OF VOTING Life and fate of the American Natives WOLF HESS THEMATIC.
Right: Tughra Stamps- Joseph Hackmey TRADITIONAL



Persia, Qajar Postal Stationery, Issued 1876-1925

This exhibit is an in depth study of the development of postal stationery of Persia; envelopes, postal cards and wrappers issued during the Qajar dynasty.

Envelopes: Postal stationery were introduced to Persia in late 1876 when 5ch envelopes were printed by the Austrian Government Printing company in Vienna. In 1875 Austrian postal administrators, under Persian contract were tasked to build and modernize the postal system based on European principles. Envelopes of different designs and values including overprints and surcharges were issued until 1904.

Post Cards: Since the first postal order with Vienna Government Printing Works only included stamps and a postal envelope, in 1878, Alexander Stahl, the Postal Director of Azerbaijan province in northwest Persia, created a number of provisional postal cards by first using existing Russian Formular cards he purchased in Tbilisi and later by using the postal cards he created. Stamps of 1876 issue were affixed to the un-franked cards to create the first postal cards of Persia. A year later, in 1879, his idea was adopted officially by the Postal Authorities and the first official post card was ordered from Austria. Various designs of postcards were issued until the end of Qajar period in 1925. Private printing firms also used the government issued postcards to create picture postcards.

Wrappers: Only 2ch value wrappers were issued during the reign of Nasser-eddin Shah. Two different designs were prepared in 1887 and 1893. Three other values were added in 1897. Wrapper rates were based on weight and distance and cannot be explained in each case.

Control Marks: Due to the farming system, each farmer, between 1897 to 1902, as an audit mechanism overprinted part of the stock with a mark enabling the farmer to control revenue. Although this mainly applied to the postal stationery issued after 1896, the small remaining stock of the 1893 issues received some of these control marks and are shown along with the original issue.

Domestic Usage: Prior to the First World War, postal stationery (postal cards and wrapper in particular) were not popular within the Persian community due to the perceived lack of privacy. The majority of usages were to abroad and of the relatively small internal usages, most of them were by foreigners.

Archival Material: Unlike some countries, there is little pre-production and archival philatelic material for Persia. This is specially the case for postal stationery. Majority of the items shown in this exhibit were produced by Enschedé en Zonen of Haarlem, Holland, and their pre-production went to their museum and later donated to Royal Philatelic Society, London. A small number of them are in private hands.

Exhibit Plan

I. Postal Envelopes
1. 1876 Nasser-eddin Shah Portrait Issue
2. 1887 Lion Issues
3. 1893 Coat of Arms Issues
4. 1897 Coat of Arms Issues
5. 1899-1904 Control Overprints
6. 1903-1904 Revalued Envelopes

II. Postal Cards
1. 1878 Russian Formular Card
2. 1878 PERSANA Cards
3. 1879 Nasser-eddin Shah Portrait Issue
4. 1893 Nasser-eddin Shah Portrait Issues
5. 1897 Mozaffar-eddin Shah Portrait Issues
6. 1899-1904 Control Overprints
7. 1903 Official View Cards
8. 1910-1915 Revalued Cards
9. 1914 Issues
10. 1920-1923 Revalued Cards
11. 1924 Ahmad Shah Portrait Issues

III. Postal Wrappers
1. 1887 Lion Issue
2. 1893 Coat of Arms Issue
3. 1897 Coat of Arms Issues
4. 1899-1904 Control Overprints

Postal Rates (Envelopes)

	Domestic Letter	Domestic Register	Foreign Letter	Foreign Register
1876 - 1884	5ch	10ch	5ch	10ch
1885 - 1891	5ch	10ch	6ch	12ch
1891 - 3/1894	5ch	10ch	7ch	14ch
3/1894 - 6/1894	5ch	10ch	8ch	16ch
6/1894 - 6/1895	5ch	10ch	10ch	20ch
6/1895 - 3/1903	5ch	10ch	12ch	12ch
3/1903 - 10/1903	6ch	12ch	13ch	13ch
10/1903 - 8/1921	6ch	12ch	12ch	12ch
8/1921 - 10/1921	12ch	1kr	12ch	12ch
10/1921 - 9/1921	6ch	12ch	1kr	1kr
9/1921 - 3/1930	6ch	12ch	10ch	10ch

Monetary System

50 Dinars = 1 Chahi, 20 Chahis = 1 Kran, 10 Krans = 1 Toman

Legend

Special Item — Original Research

This exhibit can be found at: http://qrs.ly/7x7bqb

I: Postal Envelopes
I.1: 1876 Nasser-eddin Shah Portrait Issue

Gustave von Riederer, the Director of the Iranian Posts, worked with the Austrian Government Printing Works in Vienna to prepare the first Iranian stamps and stamped postal envelope with the portrait of Nasser-eddin Shah Qajar in 1876. 300,000 pieces of 5ch envelopes arrived in Tehran in late November 1876. Although the design of the envelope is similar to the 5ch stamp, they are not identical. The size of the design, shape of the portrait and the lion are all different. Typographed on white paper. Size 155mm x 85mm.

Envelope *Stamp*

23mm 22.5mm 18.5mm 18mm

Purpose	E.K.U.
Domestic	16 February 1877
Foreign Pre-UPU	2 December 1876
Foreign Post-UPU	3 January 1878

There is a circular flower pattern measuring 16mm in diameter embossed on the flap.

Shifted Background
Envelopes were inspected on arrival and the defective ones were marked with a blue crayon. Someone has attempted to remove the marking, but it is still visible on the design.

Background Omitted
Only known example.

OUT OF VOTING IRAN Postal Stationeries 1876-1925, Behruz Nasre

Following the e-exhibition, Turkish Federation commissioned the Academy to investigate the feasibility of e-exhibition in an official format. We set up a study group. The findings of the study group are presented below for those who will organize such e-exhibitions.

Advantages

- It is possible to do with very limited budget.
- There is no need several organizing committees and staff on duty.
- Due to its difference with physical experience, there will be organizations where the young generation who are fond of internet will be predominantly involved.
- The assembly part of the work is fast and practical compared to the physical one.
- It is possible to organize various specific exhibitions simultaneously.
- It is a good resource to train and gain experience for jurors
- It enables a large number of people to participate into the exhibition.
- It allows the participation of prominent collections that are not participating to the exhibition for reasons such as security or transportation.
- Exhibitions are not at risk of being stolen or lost, accordingly costs are almost non-existent.
- It is possible to reach an unlimited number of visitors.
- It provides capacity to organize the exhibitions independent from national postal organizations.

Disadvantages

- Stamp exhibitions are social environments where people interested in similar subjects come together. E-exhibitions will restrict this kind of socialization.
- It causes the problem whether the exhibition results can be considered accredited or not.
- It will be very difficult to get support from the official authorities unless the exhibition is tangible.
- E-exhibitions can damage stamp trade and fairs.
- There will be more numbers of juror needed.
- It is needed to give fewer number of collections to jury groups compared to the current system.
- There may be no problems for up to 5 frames. However, if Facebook is used, 8-panel collections can cause problems.
- Team leaders will have more workload.
- Comparisons of similar collections may not be so quick.
- Apart from the well-known counterfeits, it is impossible to distinguish the material that needs expertise.
- The collections come in different formats and dpi, so it's not easy to follow closely.

Basic Recommendations

- How formal jury exist in e-exhibition within FIP rules? Formal jury teams can work with applications similar to Zoom. It is possible to share the data or exhibitions with these kinds of applications during the meetings. The most important problem is the necessity of having more time to spend for each collection.

- Standard format such as PDF 300 dpi should be defined.

- FIP, FEPA, FIAP etc. or National Federations can host for upload on its website

- The most important task of the Commissioners will be to give authorization for the physical existence of the collection.

Disclaimer: The Editors and the FIP Board are not responsible for the opinions and content expressed in the signed articles that appear in FIP Flash.

Descarga de responsabilidad: Los Editores y el Consejo Directivo FIP no se hacen responsables de las opiniones y contenidos vertidos en los articulos firmados que aparecen en el FIP Flash.

BIENNALE 2020, Czech Republic

www.ppcp.cz/en

The Prestige Philately Club Prague (PPCP) was founded on 28 October 2018 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak stat.

The club aims to bring together leading collectors, experts and investors in philately to present the highest quality and the traditional prestige of philately in society not only through their collecting activity, but also through the overall importance and reputation of their personality.

At the favourable time of growing interest in philately around the world, immediately after the great success of the Praga 2018 World Stamp Exhibition, the establishment of PPCP put into practice the ideas and objectives expressed earlier by several Czech and Slovak personalities from the world of philately and alternative investment.

BIENNALE 2020 – "TREASURES OF WORLD PHILATELY" at the National Museum (www.nm.cz) in Prague, Czech Republic

The exhibition will be held **from November 7th to 22nd 2020**. In the ceremonial halls on the 2nd floor of the National Museum, 80 to 100 individual rarities of extraordinary importance from the collections of members of PPCP, Club de Monte Carlo and Viennese Vindobona will be on display.

Large-scale exhibits are prepared, including the project "500 Years of Postal Services in Bohemia" and several others on the subject of classical philately, postal history and the history of philately.

The **BIENNALE 2020** will be commenced at an opening ceremony on November 6th. Prominent figures have already received invitations to the opening of the exhibition, notably President of the Czech Republic Miloš Zeman, numerous cultural representatives, Czech Post, and, of course, the leaders of the participating clubs, exhibitors and members of the media. There will be a luxury exhibition catalogue published for the **BIENNALE 2020**, the Czech Post is already preparing a **series of stamps**, **black prints** and other products – and a series of commemorative **Zero Euro banknotes** will be issued as well.

National Museum Prague

Commemorative Stamps

For the first time in history, philately will be presented under the roof of our most important cultural institution. This is evidence of its increasing importance and relevance in the Czech sociocultural environment. Most importantly, however, it offers a unique opportunity to further inspire the general public and raise awareness of the values, history and beauty of our field.

Vit Vanicek, Vice-President
Union of Czech Philatelists
PPCP

CENTRO FILATÉLICO DEL PARAGUAY

by Roberto C. Eaton
President, Centro Filatélico del Paraguay

Paraguay is under national lock down since March 2020 due to COVID-19 epidemic. The **Centro Filatélico del Paraguay (CFP)** held its annual general assembly online. Its current Board of Directors are: Roberto C. EATON, President; Dulce CORREA DE SILVERO, Vice President; Julio Rafael AQUINO, Treasurer; Rosario SOLIS ESCOBAR, General Secretary; Dila ESTIGARRIBIA DE EATON, International Affairs; Estela Mari SANCHEZ, Speaker; Francisco GOMEZ CAÑETE, Alternate Speaker; Benjamin SUGASTTI, Auditor; Catherines MENDOZA RODRIGUEZ, Alternate Auditor.

Due to the viral disaster having a high negative effect on the economy, the Board decided to continue with the policy of not charging yearly/monthly dues till further notice. The Centre will depend on voluntary contributions to operate until the situation is normalized.

EXPOSITIONS AND PHILATELIC ACTIVITIES

- The 150th Anniversary International Exposition commemorating the first stamp of Paraguay "The Standing Lion" was cancelled.
- The "Paz del Chaco 2019" in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, which was postponed till March 9 to 13, 2020 was the last exposition attended with Paraguayan collections.
- The CFP intended to participate in the S. African one frame virtual exposition this year, but it is probably not possible due to internal national restrictions.

CFP encourages philatelist and collectors in our country and in other nations to participate in MI OFICINA PHILATELIC SOCIETY, the American continent's daily virtual get together of numerous philatelic friends sharing knowledge and having a good time. Our Ms. Dila was the first woman scheduled as speaker on July 14, 2020, on **"Pre-Philately Mail of Paraguay"**. In August, she is scheduled to talk on the **First Postal Stamp of Paraguay "The Standing Lyon."** At a future presentation not yet schedules she will tentatively discuss **Mail during the Triple Alliance War**. Preparation of other presentation are being prepared and offered.

The above presentations **CFP** considers important in educating and encouraging our communities on the science of philately. It is an opportunity to raise an awareness of the rich Paraguayan philately and enlighten the numerous serious participating philatelist, who often are called on to judge collections, having insufficient knowledge of Paraguay, it's history and role in our postal environment through the centuries.

Keeping in mind the above, and taking advantage of the pause imposed, **CFP** established its own Facebook to share our history, our philately, and our culture. During this lull we have been gathering and publishing interesting happening, For example:

Gallery of eminent citizens who founded and directed the CFP.

- Mail in the Triple Alliance War (1865-70) and the Chaco War (1930-35)
- Only foreign stamps ever used in Paraguayan Territory.
- Early history of the Paraguayan airmail mail and use of Zeppelin flights.
- Information books/studies on Paraguayan stamps, tariffs, and related subjects.
- False stamps supposedly emitted by the Paraguayan Post Office in 2013.

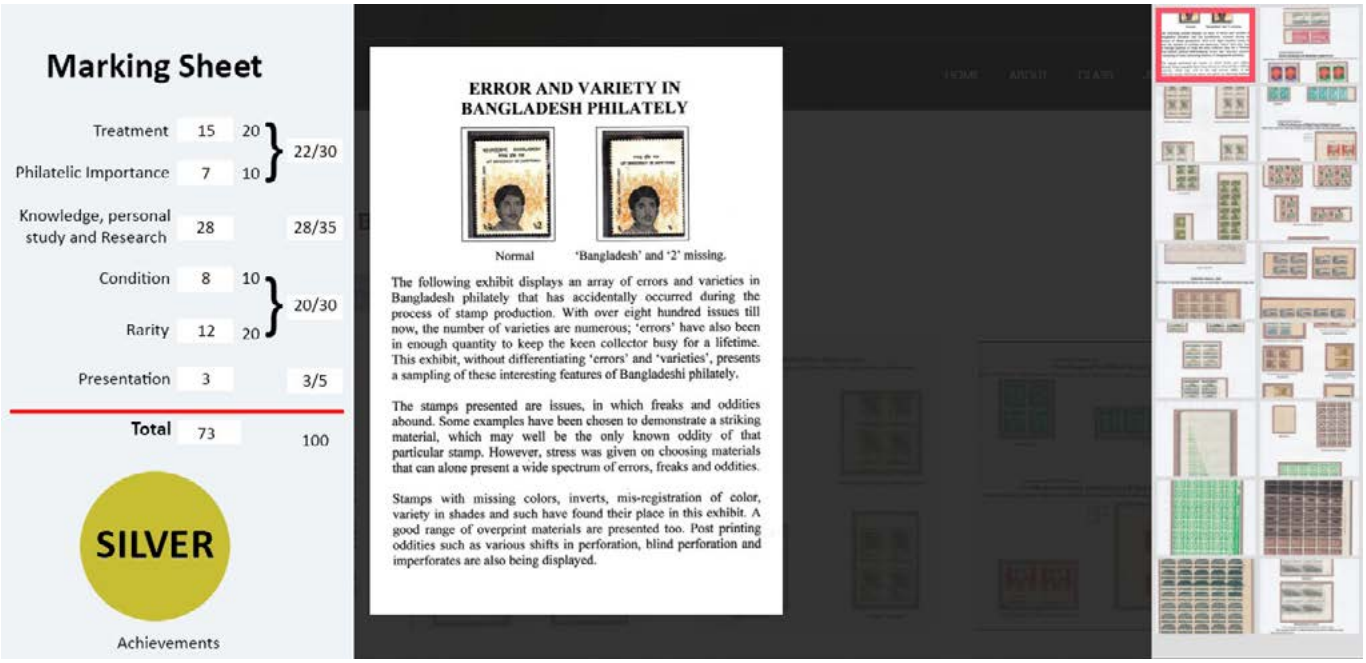
CFP plans improved communications with members, and other associations and establishing a web page. **CFP** BUILDING CONDITION requires implementing a campaign to generate funds to continue the repair of our building severely damaged by the last years of storms and flooding. Work to restart upon the lifting of quarantine.

Bangladesh National Philatelic Association First Online Stamp Exhibition in Bangladesh

by Mohammed Monirul Islam

PHILEX 2020, is an experimental online Philatelic exhibition organized by Bangladesh National Philatelic Association (BNPA) & patronage by Bangladesh Philatelic Federation (BPF) which will be started on 29 July 2020, with the purpose of promoting philately and give life of exhibiting during this crucial situation when the world is suffering for COVID-19 pandemic. This is a competitive exhibition and the competition part of the exhibition will over on 15 August 2020. This online exhibition will remain in the web for next six months.

This online exhibition and judging platform developed in Bangladesh in collaboration with Bangladesh Philatelic Federation and by stampexpo.net. It is totally new system and all Jurors can work individually as well as teamwork and they can work from different time zones. Jurors can view the exhibit frame by frame as well as individual page and can mark on the judging platform and can put any feedback and written critics on his judging page. For collectors and visitors, now they have option to view wider range of exhibits from around the world. There is no option to save or copy image of the exhibit from PHILEX 2020 website. It will give peace of mind and confident to the exhibitors to display their exhibits digitally.



PHILEX 2020 Judging Panel

The regulations are based on the FIP/FIAP standard rules & guidelines as well as individual regulations led by the Bangladesh Philatelic Federation (BPF). Most of the FIP exhibit classes are included in this exhibition except Modern Philately & Open Class but also included Picture Postcard and First Day Cover class as experimental. Around 500 frames will be on digital display in the exhibition. Anyone can view this exhibition through web link: www.philex2020.com

Hong Kong Philatelic Society meetings by Zoom

by Dr. Andrew Cheung, FRPSL

The HKPS has been running regular monthly meeting in a conference room which can accommodate some 20 to 30 members. Unfortunately due to COVID outbreak, we are forced to suspend our face to face meeting and as an interim measure, on-line meeting by ZOOM is to be held instead. Up till now, the HKPS has held two ZOOM meetings both hosted by Vice Chairman Dr. Andrew Cheung on Thursday, 18 June at 7:30 p.m. Hong Kong time and 16 July at 9 p.m. Hong Kong time respectively. A third on-line meeting has been planned on 20 August at 9 p.m. Hong Kong time. On the 18 June meeting, the subject was "Recent Fakes and Forgeries of Hong Kong, China and how to detect them"; a PowerPoint presentation by the Vice Chairman.

The presentation began with an introduction of the known postal forgeries of Hong Kong including the 1891 QV10c on red paper with fake 1 dollar in English and Chinese, fake KEVII 20c and $5, the 1996 Skyline definitive high value sheetlet and the 2006 $20 Bird definitive. This was followed by QV adhesives made by legendary forgers of Hong Kong stamps in the last century such as Spiro Brothers, Oneglia, Panelli, Sperati and Fournier.

The speaker went on to show 15 cases of Chinese and Hong Kong covers offered recently on internet and public auctions. These are dangerous state-of-the-art forgeries produced by knowledgeable forgers that would easily fool ordinary collectors and sometimes even the experienced collector.

Detection of forged philatelic material relied on (1) Intuition based on experience, (2) Philatelic knowledge and (3) Research. If still in doubt expertization by a recognized organization or individual is highly recommended.

Perhaps because of the later time i.e. 9 p.m. HKT, more local and overseas members joined the second meeting on 16 July. The meeting was in two sessions; during Part 1, member Dennis Chow gave a talk on the subject "Relatively rare stamps of Foreign Post Offices in China". The speaker showed stamps of the French, German, Japanese, Italian, Russian and British post office. For the French Post Office, he highlighted the 1901 "Hollow" cursive surcharges on 25 centimes for use in Peking and the "A Percevoir" postage due labels; for the Italian Post Office, the surcharged "Pechino" and "Tientsin" regular issues including the Lira values and postage due labels; for the German Post Office, the "Dollar on Reichmark" overprinted stamps; for the Russian Post Office, the 1904 10 kopek on vertical laid paper and the 1920 10c on 10k; for the British Post Office, the BRA overprint on 1/2 cent Coiling Dragon stamp.

The theme of the second session was "Show and Tell" by members. The host started the ball rolling by showing a 1924 letter from Hong Kong sent by President Madison, a ship of the American Mail line across the Pacific Ocean to Victoria BC and railway to New York (Figure 1). The letter was received by Cunard office since it was addressed to a passenger on board a Cunard ship, the Berengaria; the letter was sent to quarantine by the shipping company, a mail procedure practiced at that time. Since the colour of the marking is the same as the Cunard datestamp on reverse, it is private rather than post office marking.

For the first two "trial" meetings, the attendance was rather disappointing particularly by local members, but we must be prepared to accept that on-line meeting is probably new to most members and it would take some time to get use to.

However, without a doubt, an advantage of on-line meeting is to enable members from abroad to join who normally have no membership benefits aside from receiving the monthly newsletter, the annual journal and use of the website.

The HKPS has no intention of replacing face to face meeting with on-line meeting; the latter will be run from time to time pending on demand by members.

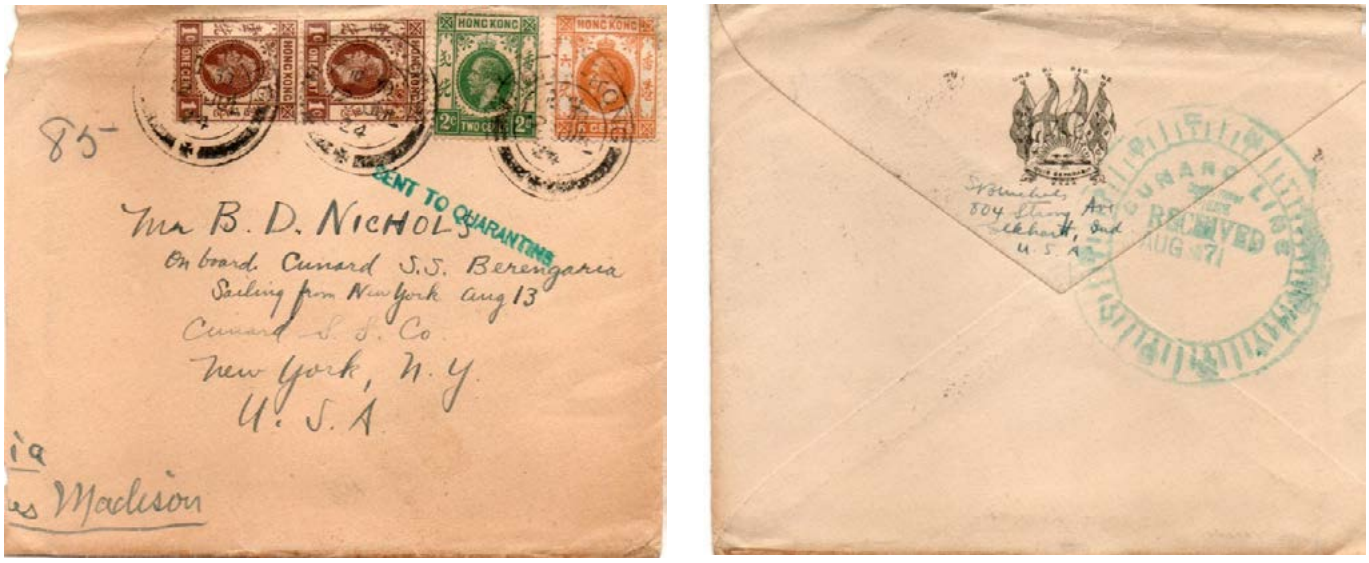


Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

An American member showed two covers mailed within just a few days of each other from Macau after the foreign residents of Canton had evacuated to that place during the First Opium War.

The first, docketed Jardine Matheson, bears two forwarding agents handstamps and was sent on August 18, 1841 per the J. Mackey & Company opium clipper Columbine to Calcutta via Singapore. The letter was then forwarded to Bombay for the East India Company steamer Victoria to Suez and continued its journey by the Overland Mail via Marseilles to London. Vince noted the important role that the opium clippers played in transporting the China mails in the years prior to the P&O packets. (Figure 2)

The second cover was mailed a few days later on August 24, 1841. Vince noted that the auction description incorrectly stated that the cover was carried "pr Leslie". However, he showed evidence that the cover was actually sent "fr[om] Leslie" and was carried by the East India Company steamer Atalanta. The Atalanta formed part of the armada assembled against the Chinese. Aboard the Atalanta was the former Superintendent of Trade in China, Captain Charles Elliott of the Royal Navy. Elliott had been relieved of his duties after negotiating the Convention of Chuenpi. The Convention, which included the cession of Hong Kong to the British in perpetuity, was considered inadequate by British authorities and led to Elliott's removal.

After the Atalanta arrived in Bombay via Singapore, the cover was conveyed by the East India Company steamer Cleopatra to Suez and carried by the Overland Mail via Marseilles to London. (Figure 3)

Honduran philately during the COVID-19 pandemic

by Mauricio Mejía, Secretary
Federación Filatélica de la República de Honduras

The COVID-19 crisis has brought unforeseen situations to the Honduran philately. Prior to this pandemic we usually gathered at one of Tegucigalpa's most famous coffee shops (photo on right), however since mid-March this has been impossible.

Since we want to keep our hobby active, we have decided to hold weekly online meetings on which we can see postal material and exchange philatelic knowledge.

Another important platform we have use to promote Honduran philately has been through the participation in the group of Latin American philatelists called "Mi Oficina" which originally was created as a social group during the FIP or FIAF exhibitions but now has evolved and hosts daily Zoom meetings on which philatelic lectures are presented and uploaded on the "Mi Oficina Philatelic Society" YouTube channel.

On this virtual platform we have shared so far four lectures on Honduran Philately (bottom left photo).

These online meetings and presentations have made it possible for us to reach to more people, many of them not residing in Honduras (bottom right photo), which otherwise would not be able to know all the details of Honduran Philately.

Updating on the newly elected Presidents of Member Federations

Federation	President/Chairman	President's Email/New Address
Centro Filatélico del Paraguay (CFP)	Roberto C. Eaton	c.filateliaparaguay@gmail.com
Asociación Filatélica Ecuatoriana (AFE)	Mrs Janira Mármol	afeboletin@gmail.com / janym7@yahoo.com

FEPA is building a European Philately Newsdesk

The COVID-19 has disrupted philatelic activities in Europe greatly. Societies have not been able to meet, exhibitions have been postponed or cancelled, and it has been very difficult for the philatelic trade to carry on its normal business. In many places, however, philatelists have found innovative ways of circumventing the restrictions on movement by using internet platforms. As a result many new opportunities for building links and maintaining communications have been opened.

FEPA has contributed by extending its reporting of philatelic activities and initiatives on its website (www.fepanews.com) to keep collectors informed and provide them with interesting insights on current developments. It has also taken the initiative to bring the news to the collector's inbox by starting to send out three-weekly Newsletters highlighting the latest developments. Through a combination of the six-monthly magazine, the website and the Newsletters, we are building a European Philately Newsdesk.

Federation of European Philatelic Associations

FEPA Newsletter - 27 July 2020

Starting May 2020 FEPA News is flying directly to your inbox

Estonia 2020 Grand Prix won by Jean-Jacques Tillard

The organizing committee of the Estonia 2020 national exhibition with international participation kept their positive attitude all through the difficult spring time, and it paid off!

FEPA Medals for 2019 have been awarded

The winners of the FEPA Medals for 2019 are:

- For exceptional service to organised philately: Chris King (United Kingdom)
- For exceptional support to organised philately: Carlo Giovanardi (Italy)
- For exceptional philatelic study and research: Henrik Mouritsen (Denmark)
  (for 'Danish Postal History 1875 – 1907')

Chris King

Carlo Giovanardi

Henrik Mouritsen

The FIAP Member Federations Activities during COVID19

NZ2020 (19-22 March 2020)

It was supposed to be the first FIAP international exhibition in New Zealand for 30 years. However the Covid-19 pandemic erupted. On 14th March the New Zealand Government imposed a 14 day self-isolation period on all arrivals into New Zealand – this made it impossible to hold an international exhibition. The Organising Committee had to decide whether to cancel the exhibition or to change it to a National exhibition – the latter was chosen and "NZ2020" became a New Zealand National Exhibition. Disappointing that NZ2020 could not have a FIAP exhibition and hosting friends from other FIAP member countries after all the hard work but the consolation was a National exhibition with over 550 frames of good and varied material for visitors to look at.

The 8th Congress of All China Philatelic Federation

All-China Philatelic Federation held their 8th Congress, 1st meeting of 8th Board and 1st meeting of 8th Executive Board on 18 June 2020 in the Beijing Post and Telecommunications Conference Center. Over 300 delegates participated in Beijing and at other 30 venues through video-link. To mark this event, China Post issued a set of one commemorative stamp (miniature sheet) of ACPF 8th Congress. The new committee of ACPF comprise the following members: Dai Yingjun (President), Zhao Xiaoguang (Executive Vice President), Zhang Yuhu (Vice President & Secretary General), Kang Ning (Vice President), Mdm Jiao Xiaoguang (Vice President), Sun Jiangtao (Vice President), Xue Kang (Vice President) and Ding Jinsong (Vice President)

Myanmar Philatelic Society (MPS) Zoom Talk Series

Due to the pandemic COVID-19 situation, Myanmar Philatelic Society cancelled the regular bi-weekly meetings since April 2020 and initiated Philatelic Talk Series for its member via Zoom cloud meeting platform. The recorded videos are posted on Myanmar Philatelic Society Facebook page so that all interested members and collectors can replay it. To date, five talks were successfully completed and five more to come. The main objective of the talk series is to attract and train MPS members the technique to exhibit. In most of the titles, the speakers tried to explains to its members with the FIP regulations on the specific classes. As a young member of the FIAP family, MPS is trying very hard to develop exhibitors and exhibits so Myanmar can participate more in the future international philatelic exhibitions.

Hong Kong Philatelic Society

The Annual General Meeting 2020 was held in the midst of a global Coronavirus outbreak at the Chinese Club on 28 May attended by 19 members in person while another 78 members sent in their proxies. The new committee was elected comprising the following members: Malcolm Hammersley (Chairman) Andrew Cheung (Vice-chairman) Daniel Szeto (Vicechairman) Stephen Chan (Hon. Secretary) John Tang (Hon. Treasurer) P.C. Shaw (Hon. Editor) William Kwan, Albert Lai, Tony Cheung and Robert Schneider

Association of Singapore Philatelists

At the Annual General Meeting of the Association of Singapore Philatelists held on 11 March 2020, the following office bearers were elected for the term 2020-2022. Mr Richard Tan was re-elected as the President for the new term.

President	Richard Tan
Vice President	Patrick Choy
Secretary	Yang Yan Choy
Treasurer	Alan Chong
International Affair Sub Committee	Yau Khai Weng

Can a pandemic finally change the world of philately?

by Colin Fraser

Has a pandemic changed the world of philately?
Some would say that it is always easier to ask a question than it is to answer one. However, if you never ask the question, you do not know what the answer might be. If what you might read currently is to be believed, philately has gone through a remarkable renaissance because of Covid -19. Whilst this claim of a renaissance might be true for many homebased crafting activities, is it really true for philately?

Philately before the Covid-19 pandemic?
Philately is many things to different people. To a collector it might be establishing and adding to their own personal stamp collection, or it might be researching the stamps or postal history of their chosen area. Some might focus on writing or publishing about some aspect of philately in the form of a book, periodical or article, perhaps they might even create an exhibit. To others, it might be participation in organized philately, being an officer of a society, study group or national / international organization. Then there are judges, philatelic politicians and socialites who may or may not even be collectors. We also have the dealers and auctioneers who trade in philatelic material (or literature) and are an essential presence in the philatelic world, but whose voices are often ignored. In recent years we also now have a generation of social media "philatelists" endeavoring to "influence" us about something. Their messages are often derivative or repetitious and many of these social media influencers seem to have no real connection to whatever it is they are promoting. Many posts are simply some image which they think is Instagramable. Some would ask legitimately whether any of this is even philately.

Philately has its private side and its public face, but what were the physical footprint of it before the Covid-19 pandemic? Apart from the activities of individuals on their own, we had in-person meetings of individual stamp clubs, study groups, visits to philatelic libraries, public philatelic auctions and other similar activities. However, the most significant manifestations of in-person philatelic activity were the local, national and international shows and exhibitions. Generally, these meant a bourse – show dealers with sales booths and frames displaying competitive exhibits. Use of the term exhibition is confusing because the "exhibits" were simply competitive entries designed to appeal to the judges rather than the public. [For simplicity I shall just refer to these events as shows.]

Whilst FIP itself does not organize shows, it did have a significant influence on the frequency, size, scope, and nature of many shows around the world before most of these events were postponed or cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Shows at all levels are multi-faceted – serving different purposes for different participants. For the dealers, who were one of the most important sources of revenue for shows, these events were a marketplace in which to buy and sell stamps and covers. At international shows, another significant section of booths used to be sold to postal administrations. Although providing some immediate sales, including stamps for philatelic passports, more significantly these booths provided an opportunity to recruit subscribers for the new issues that the participating countries produced.

There were other constituents for the shows. Collectors were there to buy stamps, and they wanted the largest number of dealers providing fresh material within their areas of interest. They may or may not have been exhibitors, but most of them showed little or no interest in the exhibits. The interests of the exhibitors were obvious. Most were really competitors, showing their prized material and looking to achieve an award. In recent years, fewer numbers of the competitors actually attended the shows.

Socialization used to be a very important part of shows. Like others in society, collectors felt a need to be included as part of a community, to meet with friends and share their interest in philately with others. For some the sense of participation was satisfying enough, but for others there was also a need to feel recognized – to win a large gold medal, or to celebrate the win of a grand-prix award.

The state of the hobby – January 2020
Let us make a realistic assessment of the state of philately at the start of 2020. From a peak in the late 1970's and early 1980's the hobby has gone through a consistent downturn. This downturn has been characterized by a significantly decreased numbers of collectors, declining participation in organized philately, decreasing membership numbers for almost all clubs and societies,

the disappearance of street-level stamp shops, fewer shows – which have seen dramatic declines in attendance and fewer exhibitors.

Wither philately? Where have all the stamp collectors gone?
It is a harsh reality that in most countries the number of stamp collectors has declined significantly over the past 40 years. This can be charted by looking at the progressive decline in membership of the American Philatelic Society:

1990 Dec 31	57,768
2000 Dec 31	52,138
2010 Dec 31	36,264
2019 Dec 31	28,877

These numbers are unambiguous. Despite of the best efforts of many, the decline in the United States and elsewhere has not been reversed.

Wither philately? Rising costs, dwindling values and changing marketplaces
Even before the global pandemic, many aspects of the hobby were under pressure. Although the financial costs of shows do not fall directly on FIP, the costs of organizing and hosting large international shows had increased tremendously and many questioned whether such shows made sense any longer in the absence of support from governmental agencies, post offices or postal administrations which had provided funding in the past.

New York 2016 deserted frames

Whilst some participants contribute financially to the shows, others draw financially from them. It is fair to say that organizing shows at all levels is a precarious financial activity. Finances play an increasingly important part in the scheduling, planning and organization of shows at all levels and budgets are finely-balanced. The large floor areas devoted to "frames", in most cases without a real audience, calls into question the model perpetuated from decades ago. The significant decline in dealer participation at these large international events reduces their appeal to stamp collectors seeking items for their collections. Purchases can now be made on-line without the face-to-face contact of yesteryear. Attendances at international shows (and most national shows) are now a fraction of what they were in the past. Many national shows, especially those in the US, have even been begging for exhibits for several years. All of these facts call into question the purpose of shows today.

Coinciding with the decline in the number of collectors, market values for most stamps (and much postal history) have also dropped. For those with long enough memories think back to market prices in the second half of the 1970's, even without adjusting for inflation. These negative price changes between the late 1970's and the start of 2020 were not confined to a single country or continent. They were almost universal. Three notable exceptions are The Peoples' Republic of China – which, contrary to the claims of the American Philatelic Society, actually has the world's largest non-profit organization for stamp collectors, the Indian sub-continent and the Middle East – notably the member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Market prices and interest in philately has grown significantly in these three regions, but declined elsewhere.

Stamp dealers and auctioneers have also been impacted. Consider the number of household names which have completely disappeared. Since the 1970's the closures of walk-in stamp stores have been dramatic. People attribute this to many factors – mostly notable a declining market and rising costs. Initially, stamps fairs and bourses replaced permanent establishments. In turn these have been largely replaced by internet sales and such entities as eBay, Delcampe, Hipstamp and others. At public auctions, the "room" attending sales had already declined significantly before the arrival of Covid-19. The presence of a few auction agents replaced in person or mail in bids. Telephone bidding became more prevalent and now on-line bidding draws much of the bidding from the agents and the telephone. Why did a buyer need to travel and attend an auction in person? Did

they want to sit through an interminably slow sale, moving slowing because of the indecision of internet bidders? Equally, did auction houses need to maintain large offices in expensive locations with a largely empty "auction room". As with shows, there were obvious indicators calling for change, but little fundamental change was actually happening.

Have we lost the urge to collect?

People collect many things – such as art, banknotes, cars, coins, and wrist watches, all for different reasons. The urge to collect is not extinct; rather there have been adjustments in most areas of collecting. A great article in the Wall Street Journal some years ago commented on the market for collectible cars and it noted the decline in the number of collectors, but stressed that the smaller number of collectors were generally both wealthier and more passionate about their interest than the larger number of collectors had been in the past. That market remained healthy. The problem is that stamp collecting has lost its appeal.

Commentators propose many contributing factors to the lack of appeal in stamp collecting. Some blame the multitude of alternative activities available today, but this does not make sense because there have always been competing activities. Some blame the internet in the same way that past generations blamed television for many ills in society. Others blame the constant outpouring of new stamp issues from postal administrations around the world, others argue stamps are not available to people because of the decline in letter writing. None of this is new nor are the arguments convincing.

More perceptive commentators would attribute the decline in stamp collecting to the lack of access to dealers as mentors and educators. This is significant. Many keen collectors in the past were encouraged and helped by their favourite or local stamp dealer. In the case of South and Central American philately, the late Brian Moorhouse was a mentor to many collectors (and exhibitors) and his encouragement of philately for that region cannot be under-estimated. He is only one of many examples whom one could cite. Local stamp stores provided access to information and guidance and with the loss of so many local stores, that advice was no longer available in the same way.

There is a further harsh reality which we also have to face. If philately is about stamp collecting, collecting involves expense, and why would a potential collector spend money buying stamps which are diminishing in monetary value? Most hobbies and recreational activities involve diminishing values in one form or another. Why are we at a disadvantage here? Stamps have become confused with investment and we now have a problem of expectation. We have to be willing and able to discuss the financial aspects of our hobby. For years, the American Stamp Dealers Association had an absurd position that members could not discuss "investment" in relation to the sale of stamps. Anyone planning to spend a significant (to them) amount of money on stamps should feel that they are acting in a financially responsible way. Professional members of a trade organization should be able to address questions relating to the financial aspects of stamp collecting. When people speak of art, coins or collectable cars, value, appreciation and "investment" are an important aspect of those market commentaries. Irreparable damage has been done to our hobby by many of those misrepresenting the investment aspects of stamp collecting. Consider for a moment the benefits to stamp collecting should those "investors" have been encouraged to form real collections rather than to just purchase cherry-picked random items from a dealer's stock in anticipation of some future appreciation. Why did the dealer sell the investor those items – well they were what he had to sell! I would argue that most collectors have done better financially than any "investor". However, why should making money be the primary purpose of stamp collecting?

Turning to the new issues which are perceived to be detrimental to interest in stamp collecting, what is the problem here? Are the new issues of today anymore "philatelic" or more expensive in real terms than those of the past? Consider the inflation adjusted cost of the British Commonwealth 1948 Silver Wedding omnibus issued just after the Second World War or even the omnibus issue for the 75th Anniversary of the UPU issued shortly thereafter. Why are we not embracing new issues and working constructively with postal administrations in many countries to encourage the use of stamps and to sustain interest in philately?

Where have we gone wrong?

Efforts to promote stamp collecting and to encourage youth have a long history. Even in the nineteenth century, stamp collecting was reported to be a hobby of older men. What has changed?

Many years ago, the Stamp Collecting Promotion Council – was established in the UK. If you google this organization today, you find nothing meaningful. How many people are even aware of the 1976 Festival of Stamps promoted by the three nation's miniature sheet issued by Ascension, St. Helena and Tristan da Cunha? In the UK, the long running Melville competitions which were designed to encourage youth exhibiting achieved little and it does not even come up on a google search. What has

the American Philatelic Society's Youth Fellowship program really done to increase stamp collecting? Whilst making a lot of noise, it has really achieved very little of merit given the money spent. Not a great return on investment. Let us admit failure and go back to the drawing board.

From a long-term perspective, it is perhaps helpful to focus some energy on encouraging youth, but it is not a solution to the real issues facing the hobby today. Each month, the American Philatelic Society publishes a list of new members. It gives their name, their assigned membership number, their collecting interests, occupation and, in most cases, their age. For many years, the majority of these new members have been aged 50 years and above. Many are significantly above 50 and they state their occupation as retired. These monthly lists tell us that those joining the American Philatelic Society are older – they are not the youth. As I have often said publicly, collecting stamps takes a combination of time, money and inclination. The older people, especially the retirees, are more likely to have the time and the money – what we need to do is stimulate the inclination. Let us focus our energy where it is more likely to be productive. Why are we not focusing our energy on that group? A group who are also far more likely to have funds to spend with the dealers and auction houses, to attend shows and pay their membership fees for clubs and societies?

Stamp collecting takes a combination of time, money and inclination. Each collector adjusts the balance of these three variables to suit their personal aspirations. The "geeky old-men" - stereotypical stamp collectors, spend money on their hobby, they derive great enjoyment from it. Let us focus our energy on encouraging the inclination of those with time and money. This will have a far greater impact on the overall well-being of philately.

A further thing to consider is the over formalization of our hobby. Stamp collecting is a very personal matter and can range from simply accumulating stamps in a largely random fashion, to highly organized and detailed studies of individual stamps, stamp issues or the postal service or postal history of a given country. There is great personal freedom in what you can choose to collect and the manner in which you wish to do it. Part of our failing is perhaps to have formalized the hobby too much. We are constantly told that there is a "right" way to do everything and that the alternatives are inappropriate or unacceptable. Rules by their very nature are discouraging. This is especially true in exhibiting – creativity is stifled by rules. Innovation has been stifled.

Consequences of a pandemic – the demise of in-person events?

Reflecting lock downs, travel bans and social distancing requirements, most in-person and crowd events such as shows have been postponed or cancelled. Opportunities for exhibitors to publicly display their collections have been curtailed. Stamp dealers whose business was based on taking tables (booths or stands) have seen their sales evaporate. Most walk-in stamp stores were closed on health and safety grounds and public philatelic auctions were either postponed or cancelled.

Cancellations or postponements have included the large international events such as New Zealand 2020, London 2020, Indonesia 2020, Bulgaria 2020, Exfugia 2020 (Ecuador) and South Africa 2021. Nationally, events cancelled or postponed include the Great American Stamp Show 2020, Autumn Stampex 2020 and most of the United States World Series stamp shows. The cancellation of events even extends to meetings of specialist societies and local stamp clubs.

To fill this void, there has been a head long rush to organize Zoom meetings and other on-line events. The American Philatelic Society and Autumn Stampex each claim to be organizing the first virtual stamp show. Online competitive shows have already taken place or are upcoming. An event, Philex2020, has already happened in Bangladesh and another event - PhilaVirtu is planned from India. The American Stamp Dealers Association can claim to have already organized virtual stamp shows, albeit on a more modest level than the American Philatelic Society or Stampex Ltd. For the last several years South Africa has hosted an international on-line one-frame competition – Savpex. Clubs and societies have thrown open their meetings to the public at large – for uncertain benefits. One can understand why paid members of these organizations might now be wondering what the actual benefits of their paid membership are. Should they renew their subscription to a specific club or organization or not? Like the real-world giants of the internet and social media, everyone is scrambling to get to the top of the mountain first. Every influencer tries to be the one to promote some event or meeting with which often they appear to have no obvious connection. It gets really tedious to receive posting after posting telling you about the same event.

Although computers and Zoom meetings may be challenging to some, they do provide some philatelic social activity to a collector, on his or her schedule. Many of the presentations are available 24 hours per day. This a something positive which

has come out of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, given the abundance of events, it is largely a matter of focusing on those meetings and presentations which are of interest and being able to filter out the steady stream that are not. It would certainly be beneficial to everyone to have some centralized and coordinated structure to all these events. Perhaps this might be an on-going role for an organization such as the FIP?

Philately – a Phoenix rising from the pandemic?

Out of the ashes of the Covid-19 pandemic some writers claim to see a philatelic phoenix rising. In April 2020, the UK based Observer newspaper ran an article with the title "Post modern: why millennials have fallen in love with stamp collecting". The article asserts that [p]hilately is gaining popularity with younger hobbyists, who are drawn to its vintage – and Instagram – appeal". In early June, The Wall Street Journal ran an article "Why Stamp Collecting Is Suddenly Back in Vogue". Both articles talk of an escape from screen based lives, and that stamp collecting is more than a hobby – it is a lifestyle and a community. How is the excess of zoom meetings, u-tube videos and on-line presentations an escape from a millennial's screen based life? Neither of these writers really discuss in a meaningful way about actually collecting stamps, supporting the dealers and participation in the established infrastructure of the hobby. Whilst on an individual level, this new-found millennial appeal may give some Twitter or Instagram excitement, it may generate fodder for some so-called influencers in the hobby, its impact is likely to again fade when social distancing becomes a behavioral pattern of the past and people can again return to their pre-Covid life style. Similarly, posting images of mostly modern material with colorful pictures is about instant gratification and becoming an influencer rather than developing an interest in forming a real collection over a long period of time. Has this frantic, frenetic internet frenzy reminiscent of Dot-Com bubble of 1995 to 2000, changed philately and laid the foundations for a long term and stable future? The answer is probably not. The question is what happens next?

Auctions respond to the pandemic and evolve

Auctions have been heavily constrained by the pandemic. The auction houses have had to make adjustments and evolve. The public auction world which was long based on in-person contact has been forced on-line. Of necessity, auction houses are exploring new sale formats and, in a number of cases, they are eliminating the old fashioned and costly "paper" catalogues completely. Whilst most of these changes have been precipitated by Covid-19, they also address the major problem all auction houses face - that of bloated costs, reflected in the now ridiculously high rate of buyers' premium changed by different houses.

Sotheby's online auction.

At Christie's and Sotheby's, the world's two leading auction houses, the adjustments have been dramatic. The consequential financial pressures from Covid-19 have forced major restructuring. Apart from significant reductions in staffing, previous sale formats, categories and schedules have been dramatically modified. Both auction houses have been incredibly creative. For example, sale categories which lend themselves to the on-line scrolling so many of us have been doing to pass the time are now offered in small, more frequent on-line sales. Annual or semi-annual auctions have been replaced by frequent weekly or monthly offerings.

On August 3rd, 2020, Sotheby's reported that it had conducted over 250 live and on-line sales to-date in 2020 (January 1–July 31), which were a strong 80 percent sold overall. More interestingly more than 30 percent of all bidders and buyers in the period had never transacted with Sotheby's before, and more than 30 percent of all bidders and buyers were under 40. Sotheby's

CEO, Charles Stewart continued: "Our team successfully took the circumstances of the past several months and turned them into opportunities, which advanced numerous initiatives that will likely change our business forever. Innovation is underway in every corner of the company: from creative sale formats that maximize flexibility for our clients, to the deployment of new digital tools that allow more people to engage with us than ever, to the launch of multiple buy-now initiatives." Helena Newman, Chairman of Sotheby's Europe said in another public statement. "…. we too have seized the opportunity to do things differently".

The auction houses have developed hybrid models that work. The question one must ask is what will be the prevailing business model after the pandemic? Will things return to the old model? Are the increases in on-line auction sales enough to replace the previous in-person sales? In May, the veteran auctioneer Simon du Pury was bold enough to make five predictions about how the auction business would change in the post-Covid era. Three are relevant for the philatelic market - a glass ceiling for prices; as auction houses contract, the excessive buyer's premiums could come down; and auction catalogues will go extinct as on-line buying and browsing becomes permanent. He predicts permanent and fundamental changes to the auction world going forward in time.

On April 24th, 2020, Linns Stamp News ran an article "Coronavirus forces shift in the way auction houses operate". Jay Bigalke discussed with principles at six United States stamp auction houses how they were handling their short-term and medium-term auction programs and more critically their long-term program. The underlying question being asked was how the corona virus pandemic had impacted the future of the stamp auction industry in the United States? The message was that auction houses needed to evolve to survive. Many of the new business practices which were discussed in the article will prevail long after Covid-19 is under control and a vaccine has been developed, tested and brought into use. Will those changes be enough for the auction houses to survive? Some will survive – others may not.

Is there a lesson for us all from how the auction houses have adjusted to their situation? Absolutely there is. What were largely in-person events have evolved into hybrid models combining in-person and on-line dimensions and these changes are likely to remain in place. Can our shows also evolve to be a hybrid between virtual and in-person.

What should in-person stamp activities look like after the Covid-19 pandemic?
As the constituents in philately, how do we want in-person philately to be post Covid-19? Individual societies and clubs have the freedom to choose what they wish to do to benefit their members, paying or otherwise. However, we all have a collective responsibility to express our opinions about how we would like to see shows and the other public aspects of our hobby evolve.

Assuming the development of an effective and affordable vaccine, and the ability to travel nationally and internationally once again, and a return to in-person events with the presence of large numbers of people, what type of events and activities do philatelists want? Are philatelists happy to see in-person events permanently replaced by on-line activities, zoom meetings and stay-at-home activities or do they simply want what they had before? I would argue that we need some form of combination between the virtual and in-person. We need to evolve in the same way that the auction houses have had to.

Changes to the show model in the post Covid-19 world
The prevailing show model, largely unchanged since the 1950's and 1960's, was already broken before the Covid-19 pandemic. It was no longer working. How do we make shows commercially viable and how do we alter the budget structure of the shows to make them less expensive to organize? The large expanse of frames at New York 2016 which was largely devoid of viewers represented a huge expense. Who paid for this? Whilst exhibitors paid substantial amounts to exhibit, did they really cover the full costs involved? Arguably not. The income from the sale of dealer booths has been a key source of revenue for shows. The aging of dealers, the consolidation of auction houses as well as the number of companies which go out of business each year will make it harder and harder to sell booths at shows. Without the presence of a large number of dealers with material for sale, people will not come to the shows. Given that much of the selling activity has moved on-line as it has with retailing in general, how do we make booths relevant to dealers, especially those who now generate most of their income on-line? How can we attract more of those dealers to participate in shows? If we look beyond philately. Amazon bought Whole Foods and has experimented with its own stores in selected locations. They have formed agreements with retailers such as Kohl's in the United States for the return of goods purchased. Clearly there is a lesson to be learnt. On-line can have a physical footprint too. The question is how do we make shows relevant for the on-line dealers?

The "new issue" business has irreversibly changed in the past twenty to thirty years. Fewer and fewer postal administrations

consider the expense of a booth justified. A smaller number of agencies now handle sales for a multiplicity of countries. This means fewer booths sold. Again, how can show participation be made relevant again for postal administrations and, on a broader scale, how can we work with postal administrations to influence their philosophy of marketing stamps? Given its global footprint, could we negotiate with the United Nations Postal Agency a promotion featuring a series of stamp issues – at a reasonable cost encouraging "A Year of Stamp Collecting"? The stamps themselves could be designed specifically to promote awareness of, and interest in, stamp collecting.

Turning to the exhibiting/competitive side of shows, the recent Philex2020 on-line philatelic exhibition based in Bangladesh even before the announcement of the results had already achieved 756,016 visits to its web site from 76 countries. These numbers represent an outstanding success with a global footprint achieved for a significantly smaller cost than it would have taken to host an in-person event. Philex2020 clearly shows the willingness to people to "attend" a virtual show.

Whilst it seems that digital might be a way to the future, a digital aspect to shows is nothing new. About 15 years ago, the American Stamp Dealers Association under its energetic and creative Executive Director Joe Savarese introduced digital competitive exhibits – Digital Philatelic Studies in combination with dealer booths and a children's' area at their New York shows held at Madison Square Garden. Perhaps ahead of its time, this did show that change could happen and that you did not need acreages of frames. Competitive exhibits were accessed through a panel of lap top computers. The judges, who were led the first time by the experienced Robert Odenweller, had the opportunity to study the exhibits in far greater detail over an extended period of time than would have been possible with traditional exhibits mounted in frames. A web site derived from this original concept and explaining digital exhibiting is still maintained by Fran Adams from California.

Today, the technology allowing for digital exhibiting has advanced greatly from what it was 15 years ago. Moving forward, how do we combine digital and real time philately in shows today and in the future? How do we make national and international shows relevant and appealing to the new generation of dealers and collectors?

Turning to other aspects of exhibiting, further questions arise. Many of these questions have a bearing on the financial viability of shows. Do the exhibitors really cover the total real cost of presenting their exhibits in the frames, having them judged, etc.? Almost certainly not. Should a greater proportion of the real cost be covered by the exhibitors themselves? For most national shows, expenses incurred by the judges are most often largely borne by the judge. At international events, the judges and commissioners are essentially paid attendees receiving free accommodation (and in the case of judges' air travel) as well as a daily stipend. These benefits represent a significant expense for the event organizers. A harsh, but important question to ask is whether the judges and commissioners would still attend and fulfil their functions if they were not provided the benefits? Could the transport of exhibits to and from international exhibitions be out sourced to courier companies at lower cost than using commissioners? Should the judges cover at least part of their own expenses? If not, why not?

Exhibiting is highly regulated. Would a relaxation of the current rules encourage greater diversity in exhibits, more educative exhibits and exhibits really highlighting philatelic knowledge and research? The formalized rules for competition currently in place at shows certainly stifles and limits innovation and creativity.

In recent years there has been an expansion to the number of exhibit classes at exhibitions. Many of these distinctions are somewhat artificial and are justified in terms of levelling the playing field. However, why do we really need to differentiate between classes such as traditional, postal history, aerophilately, etc.? Are revenues significantly different that they need their own class? Why can all exhibits not be treated on their own merits in a generalized open class? Given the digital age could we not restructure the classes of that we currently have? There could be a form of hierarchy for exhibiting, similar to the Swiss model where exhibitors might progress from a national level, to an international digital level, comprising perhaps even two levels, before progressing to a real time exhibit mounted in frames. This would lengthen the process of exhibiting by creating a stepped process and would avoid the situation where an exhibit achieves a gold first time out and then never progresses further and the exhibitor quickly loses interest. As part of this process, space at shows could be freed up for top exhibits that have progressed through the hierarchy to be expanded beyond the present 8-frame maximum. Perhaps to a ceiling of 20 frames?

Taking advantage of the opportunities of digital, philatelic studies based on digital files highlighting research and study but presenting the "exhibit" electronically and not on paper could be developed. Such presentations could even be multimedia. Such presentations would not require the vast acreages of frames, nor the physical footprint of a show to be presented to an audience.

What about other activities associated with shows? One of the successful aspects of Stockholmia was the extensive lecture program. The lectures were frequent, popular, and often well attended. Over many years similar lecture programs have been organized at national shows in the United States by the Philatelic Group of Greater Southern Africa and the India Study Circle. These lecture programs have greatly encouraged attendance at these World Series shows. Could the idea of lectures be expanded to world exhibitions under the FIP? At the highest level, there could even be a role for grand prix candidates to give a lecture or digital presentation to complement their exhibit and to answer questions from the judges. Whilst it would be best for the candidates to be available in person, given the expansion of Zoom technology these presentations could be done remotely.

As I have indicated, there is a need to actively encourage stamp collecting and not just Instagram posts, cultural / historical tweets and instantly gratifying images. In the past, did shows really help in the promotion of stamp collecting and did they help to educate children. In most cases no. The children's areas at shows were usually devoid of children. They were mostly unappealing and certainly not captivating to young people. The usual style of school visit to a stamp show involved a two hour whistle stop walk around the show floor in a large pack escorted by teachers who themselves had little or no knowledge about stamps, why they were there and what the children should be shown. At many shows, large groups of children end up sitting on the show floor with nothing to do. With little or no explanation provided, I am sure that most children are left bewildered and confused by the whole experience. The one exception to this experience was at a recent show in Jerusalem where organized guided tours of the exhibits were undertaken in small groups led by knowledgeable collectors from the show committee. In this case, it was clear that the children did benefit greatly from the experience. In most other cases the energy expended on these school trips seemed unproductive. Moving forward, how can we make shows relevant for the promotion of the hobby of actual stamp collecting amongst younger people?

As with children in school groups, members of the public who are not already stamp collectors visiting a stamp show generally derive little benefit from their visit. Most wander aimlessly around with little purpose in mind. The experience does little or nothing to encourage them to become a stamp collector. Those that find their way to the competitive exhibits are bewildered by the presentations which they find singularly uninformative to their untrained eye. Competitive exhibits are not designed to educate or entertain the public, they simply pander to the expectations of the judges. Philatelic competition is not a spectator sport.

Turning back to the FIP, can the opportunity to reassess in-person events inspire the FIP and national organizations to look afresh at shows and come up with a new model that will be more beneficial to all interested parties in philately, the dealers, auctioneers, the collectors, the exhibitors, the knowledgeable, the curious and even the millennials? Instead of returning to the old normalcy after the pandemic has abated can we take advantage of this opportunity to reset the paradigm? Rather than each and every entity trying single-handedly to change the world – and be the equivalent of a Dot-Com success story, can the interested parties not work together for the future of philately, perhaps under the leadership of the FIP?

Organized philately is highly duplicative. Can we streamline its duplicative nature and develop a collaborative strategic plan to bring about real change? Could FIP be the leader in bringing new ideas to the forefront, implementing those ideas and helping national organizations to access the technology experts and consultants that they need to create combined in-person and virtual events? Could FIP also be an organization to help focus funding where it is needed to adopt new ideas on a universal basis? The digital age is here. How do we best take advantage of the opportunity which it presents? Every generation likes to lay claim that they have changed the world. Can this current frantic, frenetic internet frenzy reminiscent of Dot-Com bubble of 1995 to 2000, change philately fundamentally and lay the foundations for a long term and stable future? Only if we are willing to change.

Growing the hobby?

Given the publication in which this article appears, it is appropriate to raise questions about FIP, its purpose and role in the future of our hobby. Whilst its role until now has been largely confined to the competitive elements of international shows, should FIP evolve to take on a significantly greater role than just its involvement with those shows? Should FIP take on a greater role in the promotion of stamp collecting around the world?

Does FIP have a strategic plan for the future? In the business world, the FIP would establish an impartial strategic planning committee to look at all aspects of its form and function and to make recommendations for change over 1, 3, 5, and 10-year

intervals. It would review the interests of all constituents and also look at what is commercially viable. The committee would look in detail at fundraising to make the necessary changes outlined in the strategic plan.

Has a pandemic changed the world of philately?
Sadly not. Has philately entered a renaissance? No, it has not. However, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the cessation of in-person events, we do have the opportunity to reassess what we have been doing, implement new ideas and to start planning for the future. That future should combine the best of the digital world with an in-person footprint.

Provocative questions
Returning to point made at the outset. It is easy to generate questions, but the answers are harder to formulate. Now is the time to question what we do, why we do it and how we do it in order to progress for the future. We should be asking questions about the full range of topics such as shows, exhibiting, judging and even the future of philately itself.

Here are a few provocative questions to start the ball rolling -

1. How do we combine the elements of the current virtual activities with future in-person activities? There are simply too many shows and exhibitions. Which ones should be eliminated on a national level and international level?

2. What would the dealers change about the current in-person shows?

3. How do you make physical in-person events relevant for on-line dealers?

4. What do collectors think is missing from shows?

5. Are shows held in the wrong places?

6. If so few people actually look at the frames, can virtual presentations replace the acreages of frames?

7. Why do we only really have competitive entries and not exhibits of real collections?

8. Do exhibitors today actually want to compete or really do they only want to share their collections with a wider audience who are not sitting in judgement on them.

9. Given the many criticisms of the results from judging, how can the process be improved?

10. What are the necessary or appropriate credentials for a judge?

11. Are the judging criteria in use today simply outdated and an attempt to quantify a purely subjective process?

12. In reality, what do such terms as rarity, importance actually mean?

13. Feedback to exhibitors – is a 2-hour session at the end of the show enough? What more could be done? Would written critiques be helpful?

14. Could FIP set up a critique / exhibit review service similar in nature to that organized by the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors (AAPE)?

15. Literature – is this really an essential part of a full FIP international show or could it be better handled in a specialized literature exhibition such as PhiLitEx 92 held in New York the autumn of 1992.

I would like to thank Fran Adams for his comments

When the COVID-19 stay-at-home mandate turned an informal group of philatelic friends into something professionally serious.

In the year 2014, we were in Cuba at the Havana Philatelic Exhibition, which included as part of the activities, the FIAF Congress celebrated in the beach town of Varadero. It is during this event when 'Mi Oficina' was born as a place to hang out and to enjoy new and old friendships, keeping on average 20+ people bonded by a common hobby, philately, while indulging ourselves with a few drinks. The setup was simple; a few bottles of excellent island rum and the original cans of Coca-Cola kept the flow around the informal philatelic discussions amongst the attendees.

This simple gesture of friendship became a must in the following years, and we say 'a must' because there is no philatelic exhibition in Latin America that does not include within its official program a unique meeting place after the long philatelic day; that is 'Mi Oficina".

To date, the cities Mi Oficina operated include, in addition to Havana and Varadero; Santiago, Cordoba, Brasilia, Rio Grande, Quito, Bangkok, Wuhan, Montevideo, and Buenos Aires. Soon will be Yokohama, San Jose, and Lima during their respective upcoming philatelic shows.

The mechanics of operations are simple; we secure a convenient meeting space in the official hotel of the exhibition. By word of mouth, the place is communicated between the philatelic friends attending the show. Everyone knows we meet daily starting at 22:00 hours every day of the show. The philatelist friends arrive, help themselves with whatever drink they want, and then mingle with like-minded people from all over the world. Mi Oficina works by the selfless contribution of the people who attend, bringing drinks, snacks, great conversations, new friends and tons of laughing every evening of the show.

At times, the coordination of the daily evening event is complex because it is necessary to have all the supplies ready; some are procured from the hotel, while others are purchased in nearby stores. Help is always plentiful with Alfonso Molina Jr. and Jacob Schwed (a.k.a. "el Viejito") in charge of the logistics.

Mi Oficina's happiness and partying lasted until the end of March of this year. One by one, each country in the world declared a lockdown due to the COVID19 pandemic. Mi Oficina had to reinvent itself.

For many other activities, meetings were conducted using digital platforms; however, they were unfriendly to the average philatelic user. One day in an email from the FIAF Board, they proposed using one of those digital platforms to hold the monthly meeting. So, the next question became obvious, why couldn't Mi Oficina do the same to meet the philatelic gang virtually?

Would people be willing to join us virtually? What about time zone differences? What convenient time would work for most of us?. Carlos Vergara from Chicago, Illinois, always used to post photos of his vegan breakfast, lunch, and dinner that make our mouths water. What if we just kick off the virtual meetings with some vegan cooking classes for the group? This topic might be an excellent excuse to meet again. Ok, but how do we start? And who would help us organize the virtual dynamics?

Who could surely help us with the virtual-setup was Henry Marquez, a Peruvian philatelist living in San Francisco, California, a technology-geek in the Silicon Valley who was one of the regulars to many Mi Oficina occasions.

We talked, discussed some general ideas, and then he proposed a simple initial structure to get started. We sent the invitations, and that same evening for the first time, we met virtually via ZOOM to remember past good times. We agreed to do the same the next evening with the commitment to invite more philatelic friends.

For about ten days, we did the same thing, ….nothing !!, but joking around and laughing! Paul Novoa from Ecuador proposed to have informal philately talks, surprisingly, something never before done at Mi Oficina!.

Enter, Mi Oficina Philatelic Society. The group started with a couple of informal show-&-tell sessions then Julio Ponce

Spectacular "asado" night in Buenos Aires, Argentina 2019.

Everything started here in Varadero, Cuba 2014, Congress of the F.I.A.F

from Peru volunteered to be the first presenter sharing his knowledge on Colonial Peru to the group. This first presentation scheduled in the digital space was named, jokingly, as: "La Escuelita MO" (The Little MO School).

The next day, April 15, 2020, there was another volunteer, Guillermo Gallegos from Mexico, and from there, it became competitive. All of a sudden, everyone wanted to talk about something they knew.

Henry set a purpose-statement for the group, "to create a Latin American philatelic video-library to be perpetuated in videos published on YouTube; with philately declining as a popular hobby we have the responsibility to share our collective knowledge and create succession." To motivate the group even further, he thought about setting a goal: to achieve 100 lectures by the end of the year. An online calendar was set up, so everyone could keep track of the daily agenda and available dates, and the WhatsApp groups were created for instant reaching out to all participant. Ok, we now have the structure and logistics.

Tono Putranto • Indonesia enjoys the camaraderie in Wuhan, China 2019.

Aldo Samame • Peru, Ariel Kwacz • Bolivia and Bernard Benston • Australia in a polo uniform.

The next evening he announced the challenge, well, little we know, in less than one month, those 100 presentations were scheduled. Then Henry decided to set up a new goal of 150, in just three more weeks, the goal was reached, again. OK, time for the next goal, 183, which in a leap-year like 2020 means one philatelic talk every other day during the entire year!. We all were sure he put the bar too high, well, once again and at the time of writing this article, the response was overwhelming; the average 60 attendees to the daily meetings have scheduled 216 presentations through the month of November. Please be advised, we are not talking about informal presentations, each presenter gives a one - hour presentation with very well researched visuals, Power Points decks of first quality, that the Classic Latin America British philatelic blog qualified as: "Perhaps similar to the sort of presentations you might expect to hear at the Collector's Club or the Royal Philatelic…except these are happening every night."

It turns out that for a Mi Oficina fellow, nothing is impossible. The evidence is more than 200 presentations scheduled during the year, every day. Thus far, we have never missed a day, and all expected technical and connectivity issues were surpassed. A first-class speaker presents each conference. We guarantee large attendance of people daily, without cost or registration required. Our access code is the same every day

Bangkok 2018.

Alfonso Molina, Luis Fernando Diaz, Jacob Schwed • Costa Rica with Tay Peng Hian former FIP President in Wuhan, China 2019.

with an enviable cordiality and education opportunities, and all run at practically zero cost of operations. High quality philatelic presentations, worldwide friendship, great times, and the opportunity to document our collective knowledge for future generations, that is what Mi Oficina Philatelic Society stands for.

The official start time every day is at 20:00 hours Lima, Peru. (for the philatelists of Latin America, Lima was the most important city in Colonial Spanish times, everything had to pass through it). The program includes 15 minutes of "vacilon", a colloquial Spanish way to say social (virtual) happy hour. The conference begins at 20:15 with a duration of 60 to 90 minutes. In the end, there is a Q&A session and discussion of the topic for an additional 30 minutes. On Sundays, there is a 13.00 slot for speakers in Europe due to the time difference. Yes, we conduct two meetings on most Sundays.

What makes Mi Oficina's digital project different is the complete freedom and non-conventional approach. Most of us know each other in person for many years. Let us remember that Mi Oficina was born as an undercover bar that operated somewhere in the lobby of the official hotel. Not anymore. Today we are part of the cyber-space, a nightly philatelic party recognized by many national Federations and even FIAF. We have evolved now to Mi Oficina Philatelic Society, leveraging some 'agile methodologies' aiming for continuous incremental improvements. A very techie-way brought by Henry to fuel the transformation.

Communication is an essential part that contributes to the success of this endeavor. Two open chats are maintained on WhatsApp, where daily information of the activities is provided. We opened a YouTube channel where the conferences are uploaded within few hours after each presentation, so that anyone at any time, anywhere in the world, can see them. There is a website under construction and a Facebook page. All of these give us the engine and thrust to communicate, be accessible to any philatelist at all stages of their collecting or philatelic journey.

The video editing and upload processes were automated by Henry; he developed a program that, with some voice recognition marks, cuts and edits the recorded sessions, adds the corresponding Mi Oficina branding, and other few details and then automatically uploads them to YouTube. Without this level of automation, it would be too tedious and time-consuming to get this process done manually every single day.

As any work done in earnest, Mi Oficina Philatelic Society has received recognition; this is the boring part, but full of gratification thanks to all Mi Oficina members. We received many emails from different parts of the world, highlighting our work and impact to the dynamics of philately. The national Federations of Argentina, Honduras, Peru, and Brazil have issued written recognition in the form of diplomas. We were also authorized by our Continental Federation, FIAF, to use their logo in the presentations.

We have surely evolved in such a short period of time; Mi Oficina Philatelic Society is a transformation sparked by the use of some technology, collective participation, and the same old hobby, which now we are taking to the next level. As such, in May 2020 it was decided to change the original name of "La Escuelita MO" (Little School) to "Academia"(Academy). When you see the quality of the presentations given at MO Academy, you will surely agree with this statement.

Now you know, the next time you attend a Philatelic Exhibition around the world and see a crazy man or woman in a polo shirt with the Mi Oficina logo ask them, "…..where is the party tonight?". You will not be disappointed if you join us!.

We want to share comments received from some of our conference attendees.

Henry Marquez • PERU/USA
"Philately is an old hobby that lights up with the particular idiosyncrasies of its followers; not all of us collect the same, nor at the same level, nor with the same depth or lightness. This diversity is perhaps one of the key elements for stamp collecting to have the worldwide reach it still enjoys.

MO initially Latino, grew with the assistance of philatelists from all over the world. Today it can be said that it is an infallible global-social-philatelic group in philatelic exhibitions around the world.

The presentations are not on light topics, by comments from many, the presentations are first-class, similar to those presented at the Royal Philatelic Society or the Collectors Club in the United States.

Mi Oficina Philatelic Society only works with the support of dozens of philatelists who, sharing the same vision and purpose of perpetuating the collective philatelic knowledge in this part of the world, decided during this worldwide COVID crisis, to face it and take advantage of the opportunity creating a new class of philatelic literature; that is "The first virtual video library specialized in philately of the Americas", which is accessible from our YouTube channel at this link; https://tinyurl.com/MO-Academy

Technology allows us to break the language barriers with the built-in YouTube translation capabilities to more than 100 languages providing "closed-captions and automatic-translation". Mi Oficina Philatelic Society is the result of the collective effort and optimism of Latin American philatelists who today redefine the new reality of world philately from virtual platforms.

Jacob Schwed • COSTA RICA
"Our hearts are breaking as we witness the effects of the pandemic in our communities around the world. While this has a devastating effect on the economy, it has been a real boost for the philatelic hobby. Stamp collectors around the world suddenly have many hours to fill as they cannot go out, go to work, or watch sporting events. Therefore, they spend time preparing virtual conferences in Mi Oficina."

Walter Britz • URUGUAY
"Something that will remain forever in my memory was the invitation, along with Eduardo Boido, made to our friends at

Walter Britz • Uruguay, Cristian Perez • Argentina, Eduardo Boido • Uruguay and Juan Pablo Aguilar • Ecuador.

Buenos Aires 2019

Mi Oficina, what we called "Party in Uruguay", prior to the exhibition Buenos Aires 2019. Without any philatelic activity, nor exhibitions or congresses, with the sole purpose of enjoy life for 3 days in Montevideo to have fun. We were visited by more than 30 philatelists from 12 countries, not only from Latin America, but also from others as far away as the USA, Israel, Switzerland, Spain and Australia. It was for me, a unique moment, that I wish to repeat again."

Heinz Junge • CHILE

"A few words to recognize the enormous effort done daily by the leaders of Mi Oficina for sharing a wide spectrum of philatelic knowledge mainly from the Americas. This valuable resource is growing day by day. Practically every day I am participating and learning about a wide range of particular topics, the best of historic context and philatelic material I never would have known about in normal times before the lockdown."

Cristian Perez • ARGENTINA

"Mi Oficina has transformed the relationship between philatelists. Before we only met occasionally at some exhibitions. Now with the daily meetings that originally were to pass the time, they turned into a series of conferences. My specialty is thematic, and as a judge for the Youth Class, I'm faced with learning about all the competition classes. The presentations given on this site meet this expectation, so I try to be there every day."

Mauricio Mejia • HONDURAS

"During the conferences I have met many people who contribute a lot of their knowledge when they comment on what they have just seen. I believe that my philatelic knowledge has increased since thanks to these presentations; they have been very well elaborated. I think from now on when I go to an international philatelic exhibition, I will be able to appreciate much better the postal material of the different countries".

Cesar Sancho • COSTA RICA

"The Mi Oficina Academy experience begins with the

Mi Oficina group being rescued from waters of the Pacific Ocean, off the coast of Valparaiso, Chile 2018.

Fonck Museum, Vina del Mar, Chile 2018 posing with the only "moai" outside Easter Island.

understanding that it has become an effective way of transmitting knowledge that would not have been possible otherwise. The assimilation of that knowledge by a universal audience, no matter what level the person is in their philatelic development, they can take advantage of what is shared. The objective of making known aspects of philately little treated or discussed previously, and with an added value that corresponds to be able to address many philatelic classes, even thinking about the development of the judges' criteria, a substantial improvement in competitive collections, is widely fulfilled."

Luis Fritzen • BRASIL

"Mi Oficina is a fraternal experience that Latino collectors make during philatelic exhibitions face to face, usually during the evenings. Always with good conversations, jokes and serious business. During the COVID19 pandemic, friends began meeting daily for informal conversations. Soon the need was felt to formalize conferences, for the exchange of information".

Roberto Cravero • ARGENTINA

"Since the closure began with the COVID19, I thought that the series and movies on television would not be enough to support the closure. Luckily, a message appeared on my mobile phone advising me that Mi Oficina was doing a virtual meeting on ZOOM . Today I cannot evade the virtual meetings with my friends, where we laugh, chat like at a bar table, or have a drink in the lobby of a hotel, and then pay attention to the speaker so that one can ask about the unknown of the day's topic. I never thought I learned so much about philately as in these meetings."

Juan Pablo Aguilar • ECUADOR

"I do not hesitate to affirm that Mi Oficina Academy is the space in which I have learned the most about philately. I do not hesitate to describe it as the best thing that has been done, since philately is philately. To spread, share studies, and research

Henry and Jenny Marquez • Perú, Paul Novoa • Ecuador, Walter Britz • Uruguay, Teddy Suarez • Ecuador and Carlos Vergara • Chile in Brasilia 2017.

Hany Salam • Egypt celebrates with the Latino gang in Wuhan, China 2019.

that otherwise would be reduced to small circles. Thanks to this collective effort, what is undoubtedly the largest repertoire of philately, postal history. Free access available to all who have an interest in knowing or using it is increasing".

Paul Novoa • ECUADOR

"Friendship within Latin American culture does not understand much of common pasts or parallel stories. The past is important, but it no longer exists. Friendship in the Latin culture takes great strength when the social relationship approach seeks a common, dignified, and important objective in any of the spheres of social development. Latin souls are more than a joke, more than a set of laughter and more than a galloping roar when they come together, they are an overwhelming force when they plot a common good.

People from many countries enjoy low temperatures on the island of Saint Pierre, Northwest Atlantic, in front of Canada.

Solidarity, camaraderie, respect for others, make Latino meetings a hurricane of strong force and emotions in bulk. The Havana meeting led us share an extraordinary moment of unparalleled camaraderie. This was the beginning of something unstoppable.

Since then we have not stopped meeting, to crumble long and entertaining philatelic gatherings, with the emotional passion that distinguishes the Latin soul. The space has been baptized with a simple and unforgettable name that will endure over time and in our hearts "Mi Oficina".

David Braun • MÉXICO

"In life you need to be lucky. I had this when I met Alfonso Molina in Havana in a taxi in 2014. We had luck in Varadero, enjoying days with heavy tropical storms, which gave us the opportunity to organize Mi Oficina. I have great friends as colleagues, with whom I have shared happy moments in many countries. The luck of having a large number of philatelists, all friends, daily, who have turned these difficult times into pleasant and interesting moments. I hope soon the luck of being able to hug you all, and especially Teddy".

This article was written in Spanish by Alfonso Molina and freely translated into English by Jacob Schwed and Henry Marquez. Many of the photographs were provided by Carlos Vergara.

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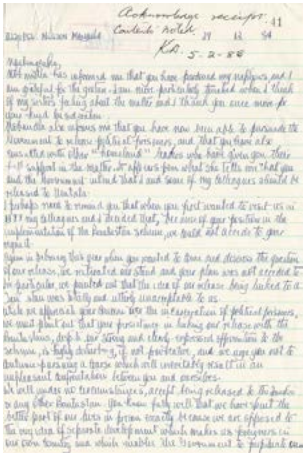

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